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THE MYSTICISM OF AMADO NERVO AND MAETERLINCK

By GEORGE W. UMPHREY

During the fifteen years that Amado Nervo spent in Paris and Madrid he became well acquainted with the writings of Maeterlinck and was, until his death in 1919, one of the most enthusiastic admirers of the Belgian poet, playwright, and philosopher. Scattered through the twenty-nine volumes of his *Obras Completas*¹ are many references to "el hondo Maeterlinck,"² "el sutilísimo Maeterlinck,"³ "cuya sagacidad ha ahondado tan profundamente en el corazón del enigma...";⁴ brief quotations from Maeterlinck serve as captions for individual poems or collections of poems;⁵ longer quotations appear in several essays in confirmation of his own ideas. Besides these acknowledged borrowings, so much of the mystical philosophy of *La Sagesse et la Destinée* (1898) permeates *Serenidad* (1914), *Elevación* (1917), and *Plenitud* (1918) that there can be little doubt of Maeterlinck's influence; and so Maeterlinckian are many of the ideas that he put into his essays that he might even be charged with plagiarism.

Such an accusation would do the Mexican writer a great injustice. Similarity of literary influences and cultural environment would account for some of these resemblances; similarity of temperament would account for others and would help explain Nervo's willingness to accept Maeterlinck's ideas and theories regarding the spiritual problems with which they were both preoccupied.

It was during his second residence in Europe, beginning in 1905, that Nervo came definitely under the influence of Maeterlinck; by that time the latter had abandoned the philosophy of human frustration and pessimistic fatalism that characterize his early poetry and plays in favor of an optimistic confidence in the ability of the human spirit to turn to its own uses the sorrows and misfortunes caused by exterior conditions and events. Many reasons might be given for this radical change; the main cause, undoubtedly, was the influence of the mystics to whom he had turned for comfort and guidance in the moral and religious problems that were besetting him. His translations from Ruysbroeck (1891), from Novalis (1895), with long introductory essays, and his essay on Emerson (1894) prepare us for the new kind of motivation that we find in *Aglavaine et Sélysette* (1896) and in almost all his later plays. In *Le Trésor des Humbles* (1896), his first volume of essays, his growing admiration for the mystics is quite apparent; also his belief in intuition as the only approach to spiritual reality. Speaking of Ruysbroeck he says: "Son

¹ Madrid, 1920-1928. All prose references for Nervo are to the various volumes of *Obras Completas*. The poetry references are to the one-volume edition *Poesías Completas* (Madrid, 1935).

² *Las Ideas de Tello Téllez*, in *Obras Completas*, XIX, 106.

³ "Los Dos Sacos," *Obras Completas*, XXVI, 38.

⁴ "Eutanasia," *Obras Completas*, XXVI, 197.

⁵ *Poesías Completas*. See pages 576, 647, 655, 663, 669.

âme, ignorante et simple, reçoit, sans qu'elle s'en doute, les aveuglants reflets de tous les sommets solitaires et mystérieux de la pensée humaine."⁶ Of mystics generally: "Je crois que les écrits des mystiques sont les plus purs diamants du prodigieux trésor de l'humanité. . . ."⁷ Time and place have no effect on spiritual truths: "Les vérités mystiques ont sur les vérités ordinaires un privilège étrange; elles ne peuvent ni vieillir ni mourir."⁸

The spiritual evolution of Amado Nervo from the orthodox Roman Catholicism of his youth, through the agitated skepticism of his middle years, to the comparatively serene spirituality of the last, most fruitful, period of his literary career, was in its final stage when he turned definitely to the mystical doctrines of the great religions of the East as well as of the West; and in the formulation of the eclectic religious philosophy that was to control his actions and thoughts for the rest of his life, Maeterlinck played an important part. As we shall see later, Nervo became more mystical than his teacher, more inclined to follow mysticism to its ultimate, uncompromising conclusions.

The mysticism that we find in Maeterlinck and Amado Nervo may be defined as the intuitive cognition of spiritual truth. It presupposes the awareness of mystery and a persistent desire to penetrate it; it implies introspection and meditation, detachment, silence, and solitude; it is activated by love of a Supreme Being, of oneself, and of all humanity; as evidence of the attainment of spiritual truth it offers joyousness of spirit, optimism, serenity, and peace of mind. We shall attempt to show that our poet-philosopher and our philosophic poet possess these characteristics; and by way of suggestion, indicate the extent of Maeterlinck's influence upon the Mexican poet.

AWARENESS OF MYSTERY

It has been said of Maeterlinck that no other modern writer has shown a deeper and more persistent preoccupation with the mysteries of life, death, and the beyond; he has always been, as he once said of himself, "un esprit qui se laisse aller au mystère."⁹ Not only do we find this unusual sense of mystery in the motivation of his early plays and in the long essay "L'Évolution du Mystère" (1902): it is apparent in almost all his essays. Two or three of the many quotations that could be given will suffice.

Il est fort raisonnable de croire . . . que l'intérêt principal de notre vie, que tout ce qui est vraiment élevé et digne d'attention dans notre destinée, se trouve presque uniquement dans le mystère qui nous entoure, et de préférence dans ces deux mystères plus redoutables et plus sonores que les autres: la mort et la fatalité. . . . C'est la conscience de l'inconnu dans lequel nous vivons qui confère à notre vie une signification qu'elle n'aurait point si nous renfermions dans

⁶ *Le Trésor des Humbles* (1896), p. 103.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 111-12.

⁹ "L'Évolution du Mystère," *Le Temple Enseveli* (1902), p. 112.

ce que nous savons, ou si nous croyions trop facilement que ce que nous savons est de beaucoup plus important que ce que nous ignorons encore. . . .¹⁰

La grandeur de l'homme se mesure a celle des mystères qu'il cultive ou devant lesquelles il s'arrête.¹¹

Il suffit de gratter la surface de n'importe quel mot, de n'importe quel fait, de n'importe quelle pensée, pour trouver le mystère.¹²

A similar preoccupation with the mysterious aspects of life makes it possible to say of Amado Nervo that he is the poet of mystery par excellence in Spanish-American literature. It is true that he had much less to say about mystery in the abstract than did Maeterlinck; implicitly, however, in his enigmatic short stories and in a large part of his poetry, the haunting mystery of life and death is almost as pervasive as in the writings of Maeterlinck. The disquieting sense of the mysterious to which he gave expression in one of his early poems ("El ansia del misterio me agita y desespera"¹³) remained with him and deepened with the passing years.

INTUITIVE COGNITION

Maeterlinck became one of the most popular essayists of the first decades of the century, not only because of the unsurpassed artistry of his treatment of moral and religious questions, but also because of his use of the scientific method in the study of that part of man that the scientists had usually considered as something outside the scope of science. He was deeply interested in the world about him, learned what he could from the natural scientists, and made his own careful observations. Deeper than his interest in the physical world was his interest in man's moral and religious problems; for the solution of these his sensory and reasoning faculties were of no avail. He knew that spiritual truth could be discovered only by the spirit; but, he asked himself, could this not be done scientifically? Just as he had gone to the natural scientists for knowledge of the physical universe, he turned to the writings of the great mystics for knowledge of the world of spirit. From their experiences and from the objective introspection of his own inner life he assembled his spiritual data; these he then subjected to the careful scrutiny of his reasoning faculty. If they were acceptable to his intelligence and if they were not inconsistent with scientific concepts of natural phenomena, they were formulated into the moral and religious theories that he put into his essays. His mastery of a prose style of rare poetic beauty and his happy faculty of drawing upon science, literature, and life for striking metaphors and analogous illustrations gave him the prestige that he enjoyed a generation ago.

When Amado Nervo became acquainted with these essays, the consoling doctrines that he found in them were just what he needed

¹⁰ "L'Evolution du Mystère," *Le Temple Enseveli*, pp. 103-04.

¹¹ *La Mort* (1913), p. 29.

¹² *La Grande Porte* (1939), p. 39.

¹³ "El Exodo y las Flores del Camino," *Poesías Completas*, p. 337.

in the spiritual crisis through which he was passing. Ten years earlier the orthodox religious faith of his childhood had been undermined by the natural sciences; he had renounced his ambition to become a priest and had turned to journalism as a means of livelihood; he had exchanged the provincial life of a small western town for the cosmopolitan life of Mexico City. There his success as journalist, short-story writer, and poet opened the doors of the best literary and social circles and made it possible for him to go to Europe. In his first sojourn in Paris, he seemed to be satisfied with his growing reputation as a *Modernista* and with the Bohemian life of his Modernistic friends; gradually, however, he began to give heed to the inner voice that kept telling him that without spiritual growth and some religious faith there could be for him no real happiness. Withdrawing more and more from his irreligious friends and material pleasures, he turned, as Maeterlinck had done, to the literature of mysticism; and through much reading and meditation he finally evolved for himself a religious philosophy that gave him some degree of serenity and enabled him to produce the poetry that assures him a high place in Mexican literature. The mystics could not answer all his questions; they did convince him that spiritual truth can be found only by probing the inner life of the spirit, that spiritual concepts can be gained only by intuition, independently of any sensory or reasoning process.

As an illustration of the intuitive method of approach to spiritual reality, let us consider Maeterlinck's conception of what he calls *L'Hôte Inconnu*, the subconscious, subliminal self of each individual and its relation to the Supreme, Cosmic Spirit. This cosmic force is beyond the reach of the intelligence, "l'intelligence qui . . . nous tient captifs au fond d'un petit creux de l'espace et du temps."¹⁴ Its very existence, its nature, and its immanence in the human spirit can be grasped only by spiritual intuition:

c'est au fond de nous, dans le silence et la nuit de notre être, où il ne cesse de s'agiter et mène notre destin, que nous devons nous appliquer à le surprendre et à le découvrir. . . . Des creux les plus obscurs de notre moi, il dirige notre vie véritable, qui est celle qui ne doit pas mourir, sans se soucier de nos pensées et de tout ce qui émane de notre raison qui croit guider nos pas. . . . Il représente dans l'individu, non seulement l'espèce, mais ce qui la précède et lui succédera et n'a ni commencement ni terme; c'est pourquoi rien ne l'atteint, rien ne l'émeut qui n'intéresse pas ce qu'il représente. . . . La raison a beau lui prouver, par d'irrésistibles syllogismes, qu'il se perd dans l'erreur; il se tait sous le masque immobile dont nous n'avons pas encore su saisir l'expression, et poursuit son chemin. . . .¹⁵

This conception of a cosmic intelligence, "une volonté supérieure, consciente, raisonnable, surhumaine, et pourtant semblable à celle de l'homme,"¹⁶ is not new; Emerson had already discovered it in the mystic literature of the East and had given it the appearance of

¹⁴ *L'Hôte Inconnu* (1917), p. 241.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 301-02.

¹⁶ "L'Évolution du Mystère," *Le Temple Enseveli*, p. 157.

originality in his conception of the Over-Soul. William James refers to it as the cosmic consciousness; Bergson, as the *élan vital*. The originality of Maeterlinck lies in his application of the idea to the solution of various spiritual problems.

The idea of a cosmic consciousness and its immanence in the subliminal self of each human being made a strong appeal to Nervo. He gave it poetic expression in several of his later poems; and in some of his last essays we find it stated in many ways. In "La Cuarta Dimensión," for example, he examines the urgent need for a fourth dimension. The physical world, known to us through our sensory and reasoning faculties, is a world of three dimensions; a fourth dimension is needed to explain the real mysteries of life, the unsolved mysteries of the spirit. "Todos los porqués humanos dejarían tal vez de formularse si conociésemos una dimensión más: la cuarta."¹⁷ But those who know, intuitively, that there is a fourth dimension, since they have to explain it in terms of the well-known three dimensions, how are they to convince the skeptical? Perhaps it is only the poets, in whom mysticism is congenital and who live normally in a world of four dimensions, perhaps they alone can give us, through their poetic imagery, glimpses of the real world.

El éxtasis poético, semejante a todos los éxtasis, no es más que el acceso a una dimensión nueva y la consiguiente deleitosa y admirable sensación de que se han quebrantado los límites que encierran nuestras percepciones del universo como rejas invisibles. . . . Sigue teniendo conciencia de su yo; una conciencia apacible; pero la naturaleza delimitada no se refleja ya en sus ojos sino como en un espejo y todas las sensaciones de sus cinco sentidos son superficiales.¹⁸

In the semi-flippant, semi-serious essay *Durar . . .*,¹⁹ discussing the immortality of worldly fame and that of the individual soul, he states as a possible hypothesis:

La inmortalidad no se nos da tal vez sino al precio de la despersonalización. Para ser eternos tenemos quizá que entrar en el seno inmenso de la Conciencia Unica, del solo Ser eterno que existe, de aquel a quien el sagaz Maeterlinck llama en su último libro *El huésped ignoto* [*L'Hôte Inconnu*] y que tiene más allá de nuestras conciencias una existencia secreta, activísima, que se comienza apenas a estudiar, y que, si descendemos hasta las últimas verdades, es nuestra sola existencia real.²⁰

LOVE OF GOD AND OF HUMANITY

"Love of God," the simple definition that Dean Inge has given of mysticism, would suffice to define a large part of the mysticism of Amado Nervo. In the religious poems of his last years and in his essays he gives frequent expression to the belief that the only way to attain spiritual reality is through love; love, not knowledge, leads directly to God.

¹⁷ "La Cuarta Dimensión," *Obras Completas*, XXVIII, 169.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, XXVIII, 179-80.

¹⁹ *Obras Completas*, XXVIII, 192-201.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, XXVIII, 198-99.

¿Por qué se entromete la inteligencia en las cosas del instinto, de los instintos supremos que la Vida ha puesto como sillares de la individualidad? El Amor lleva consigo su luz; no lo alumbéis con vuestra ridícula cerilla intelectual. . . .²¹

Dios dice a Pascal en las meditaciones: "Console toi, tu ne me chercherais pas si tu ne m'avais trouvé." . . . El que busca, en efecto, a Dios con ahínco, es porque le ama, y el que le ama, ya le posee. Amar a Dios y poseerle, es todo uno.²²

¿Por qué empeñarse en *saber*
cuando es tan fácil *amar*?
Dios no te manda entender;
no pretende que su mar
sin playas pueda caber
en tu mismo pensar.

Dios sólo te pide amor:
dale todo el tuyo, y más,
siempre más, con más ardor,
con más ímpetu . . . ¡Verás
cómo, amándole mejor,
mejor le comprenderás!²³

Eres uno con Dios, porque le amas.
¡Tu pequeñez qué importa y tu miseria,
eres uno con Dios, porque le amas!

Le buscaste en los libros,
le buscaste en los templos,
le buscaste en los astros,
y un día el corazón te dijo, trémulo:
"¡aquí está!" y desde entonces ya sois uno,
ya sois uno los dos, porque le amas. . . .²⁴

This personal, essentially Christian, love of God could have no counterpart in the writings of the agnostic Maeterlinck. Incessantly probing the mysteries of human destiny, he reached the conclusion that all institutional religions tend to cramp the free development of the spirit and should be rejected; neither Christianity nor any other creed that relies mainly upon faith has been able to pass the scrutiny of his alert intelligence. And yet few modern writers are more profoundly religious than he. What he once said of man's instinctive belief in God, "ce qu'il y a de plus profond dans l'homme c'est son désir de Dieu," has remained an essential part of his philosophy, and he has never wavered in his serene belief in a Supreme Being. God is for him not a personal God created by man in his own image, but rather a Universal Spirit of absolute justice, goodness, truth, and beauty. His love of God is a quiet, controlled passion for these divine moral and aesthetic qualities that each individual spirit shares with the Supreme Spirit. His mysticism is more complex, more intellectual and argumentative, than that of the Mexican poets.

In their love of humanity our poet-philosophers approach each other more closely. Love of God implies love of oneself and love of all one's

²¹ *Las Ideas de Tello Téllez*, in *Obras Completas*, XIX, 55.

²² *Plenitud*, in *Obras Completas*, XVII, 63-64.

²³ "Comprensión," *Poesías Completas*, pp. 819-20.

²⁴ "Uno con El," *Poesías Completas*, pp. 812-13.

fellow men. As Maeterlinck puts it: "On ne parvient à aimer Dieu qu'avec l'intelligence et les sentiments qu'on a acquis et développés au contact des hommes."²⁵ This must be true, Nervo adds, since God is immanent in each human soul: "No se puede amar a Dios sin amarse uno a sí mismo, ya que Dios está dentro de nosotros y es lo más de nuestro yo. . . ."²⁶ This idea underlies many of his later poems and essays and explains why he is the best loved of all Mexican poets. *Plenitud*, a volume of aphoristic prose poems, is permeated through and through with human sympathy, charity, and love; with his optimistic belief in the essential goodness of life and his faith in the ultimate victory of good over evil. His altruism goes beyond that of Maeterlinck; for him, the Christian doctrines of renunciation and self-sacrifice are good in themselves; for Maeterlinck, their goodness depends entirely upon their motivation and necessity:

Cherchons notre bonheur dans le renoncement quand il n'est plus possible de le trouver d'ailleurs. . . . Mais il n'est ni sage ni utile de consacrer sa vie a la recherche de sacrifice. . . .²⁷

EVIDENCE OF THE MYSTIC EXPERIENCE

Many of the great mystics of the past have given as proof of their ecstatic vision the exultation of spirit, joyous serenity, and peace of mind that resulted from their direct communion with the Divine Spirit. Although neither Maeterlinck nor Nervo has ever claimed this supernatural, mystic experience, they do give similar evidence of having attained spiritual truth by the mystic approach. As Nervo says in one of his essays: "Dicen los filósofos espiritualistas, Bergson entre ellos, que el mejor signo de que hemos acertado, y hablo aquí del acierto máximo, de la concordancia entre nuestros actos y el ideal, es la alegría interior."²⁸ Or, in a later essay: "El signo más evidente de que se ha encontrado la Verdad es la paz interior."²⁹

Perhaps the best evidence of mysticism in our poet-philosophers is the optimism that changed completely their outlook upon life after they had turned to the mystics for guidance.

We have already noted the profound change that took place in Maeterlinck's attitude toward life in the closing years of the century. In *Le Trésor des Humbles* (1896) he could still refer to "le bon optimiste Emerson" with the apologetic comment that "rien n'est plus décourageant qu'un optimiste volontaire"; two years later, when he published his second volume of essays, *La Sagesse et la Destinée*, he was almost as optimistic as Emerson himself. This optimism, so characteristic of almost all his essays since, has been very annoying to his naturalistic critics; it has given comfort and consolation to the

²⁵ *La Sagesse et la Destinée* (1898), p. 253.

²⁶ "La Verdad," *Obras Completas*, XXVI, 182.

²⁷ *La Sagesse et la Destinée*, pp. 136, 137.

²⁸ "Conciencia," *Obras Completas*, XXVI, 219.

²⁹ *Obras Completas*, XXVII, 202.

great majority of his readers. Among these, as we have already seen, was Nervo; no one needed more than he this encouragement during the time that he was struggling up the steep slopes of *La Montaña de la Serenidad*.³⁰

Optimism, serenity, peace of mind are as characteristic of his later poetry and prose as were the pessimistic melancholy and despondency of his earlier work. And he does not hesitate to confess his new faith in human progress. He belongs, he tells us at the beginning of *Los Balcones* (1915), to that sane group of optimists, "los cuales piensan que la mayor parte de los males que aquejan a la humanidad son obra de la propia estupidez humana y por lo tanto remediabiles."³¹ In the poem *Optimismo* he declares that "Nada en el fondo extingue mi tenaz optimismo."³² And again in the volume of essays *En Torno de la Guerra*, "Soy un optimista incurable."³³ Through *Plenitud* there runs a vein of optimism that is wholly convincing in its sincerity. Moods of pessimism return, of course; for we must not forget that we have to do with a highly emotional, temperamental poet, whose changing moods, reflected in his poetry, do not make for consistency. The optimism that burned in Maeterlinck with a steady glow during the years of his most significant contributions to literature was for Nervo a flickering flame, now bright, now dim, according to his changing moods.

SILENCE AND SOLITUDE

Since introspection and meditation are part of the mystic process, Maeterlinck and Nervo, like all mystics, have much to say in praise of silence and solitude. Carlyle's well-known comment, "Silence is deep as Eternity, speech is as shallow as Time," was developed by Maeterlinck into an essay, *Le Silence*.³⁴ Nervo used it as the caption for his poem *La Mejor Poesía*,³⁵ and composed other poems on the same theme.³⁶ Both give frequent expression to the pleasure of solitary meditation. Maeterlinck, living a more normal social life and less given to extremes, has always shown a sensible attitude toward social intercourse and solitude. There is a physical reality as well as a spiritual; it is a question of their relative importance.

Nous sommes après tout des fragments de matière animée, et il est bon de ne pas négliger le point de départ de notre être. Mais ce n'est pas une raison pour emprisonner tous nos bonheurs, toutes nos espérances, dans la petite circonférence de ce point de départ.³⁷

³⁰ *Serenidad*, in *Poesías Completas*, pp. 476-77.

³¹ *Obras Completas*, XVI, 22.

³² *Serenidad*, in *Poesías Completas*, p. 474.

³³ *Obras Completas*, XXIV, 43.

³⁴ *Le Trésor des Humbles*, pp. 9-25.

³⁵ *Elevación*, in *Poesías Completas*, p. 734.

³⁶ "Callemos," *Poesías Completas*, pp. 722-24; "El Silencio," *ibid.*, p. 777.

³⁷ "Le Règne de la Matière," *Le Temple Enseveli*, pp. 175-76.

Nervo was more inclined to go from one extreme to the other; in his youth he loved solitude; during the years when his religious skepticism convinced him that material pleasures are all that life has to offer, he found it distasteful; his love for it returned with his new religious philosophy. Although he did not neglect his diplomatic duties, he withdrew more and more from social intercourse and worldly pleasure. So detached did he become at times that he was inclined to accept the Hindu doctrine that the material universe is nothing but an illusion, "el Maya esotérico detrás del cual está la Verdad."³⁸

Having noted the similarities of Nervo and Maeterlinck in their attitude toward mysticism, let us now consider briefly the more significant differences. These, as has already been suggested, have to do mainly with the relative intensity of the mystical qualities that they possess in common. Maeterlinck's deeper, more consistent, loyalty to the scientific method of investigation has modified his conception of intuitive cognition; Nervo's eclectic religious philosophy, essentially Christian, came to rely more and more upon faith, to the increasing disparagement of the human intelligence.

At the time of his religious skepticism he was deeply interested in the natural sciences and believed that they would finally discover the ultimate truth of things, spiritual as well as physical. He became a disciple of Taine; he shifted his loyalty to the more congenial Renan; then, putting his faith more and more in the intuitive approach to spiritual reality, he followed with avidity the lectures of Bergson. "En realidad, todos los grandes filósofos modernos—Bergson entre ellos—esperan de la ciencia la fórmula religiosa del porvenir."³⁹ Finally, although he continued his journalistic work as a popularizer of science, he became convinced that neither science nor the human reason could help him find answers to his spiritual problems.

Although the scientists persist in treating Maeterlinck's nature studies as hopelessly amateurish and object to his application of the revelations of science to moral and religious questions, he has remained loyal to the scientific method. More than once he has expressed the hope that some day the natural sciences might even open the door of the spiritual world. Whether he is studying the natural phenomena of bees, ants, and flowers, or the metaphysical questions of Time, Space, and Eternity, or the deeper mysteries of the human spirit and its relation to the infinite spirit of the universe, his intelligence always remains in complete control.

A similar difference may be noted in their preoccupation with life's mysteries. Long ago Maeterlinck became convinced that human intelligence and intuition can hope to do no more than bring into the circle of the known that which is knowable, and that there will always

³⁸ *Obras Completas*, XXI, 109.

³⁹ "La Muerte del Ateísmo," *Obras Completas*, XXVI, 73.

remain much more that is unknowable, that the greatest mysteries will never be solved.

Si l'humanité se rapprochait un jour de ceux qui lui semblent aujourd'hui les plus grandes et les plus inaccessibles: par exemple, l'origine et le but de la vie; derrière ceux-ci, comme des montagnes éternelles, elle en verrait immédiatement surgir d'autres qui seraient plus grands et aussi insondables.⁴⁰

Far from being discouraged, he found in this fact cause for rejoicing. If there were no unsolved enigmas, the infinite would become finite, the universe would shrink to the dimensions of our human intelligence: "L'inconnu et l'inconnaissable sont y seront peut-être toujours nécessaires à notre bonheur."⁴¹

Although Nervo attempted to put into his essays this philosophical resignation to the inevitable, it did not satisfy his personal needs. What he had to have for serenity and peace of mind was certainty, not inconclusive speculations and vague hypotheses that could neither be proved nor disproved. Frustrated in his yearning to solve his enigmatic problems, he poured into the molds of poetry his petulant distrust of science and philosophy, his torturing doubt and despair. It was only at intervals that he could attain the calm serenity of Maeterlinck.

In conclusion, it may be said that, although Maeterlinck and Nervo would seem to possess the attributes of mysticism, they are not true mystics in the sense that Saint Paul, Ruysbroeck, Saint Teresa, and William Blake are mystics. Nowhere do they claim to have had the mystic experience of communion with the Divine Spirit; nor do they have the consistent, uncompromising attitude of the true mystic toward spiritual reality. They are intellectual, twentieth-century mystics, somewhat in the manner of a William James or a Bergson; they are mystical idealists who have formulated no systematic philosophy, poet-philosophers who have clothed old ideas and doctrines with the poetic imagery that makes them seem new. They do not reject the demands of the intelligence, nor do they refuse to accept the contributions that modern science has made to our knowledge of the physical and metaphysical world. They accept this knowledge within its limited sphere and express the hope that some day progressive science may penetrate the real mysteries of life. In the meantime we must turn for spiritual truth to the mystical literatures of the East and the West, assimilate their teachings as best we can, and discover new spiritual concepts and hypotheses by the same mystical approach, by introspection, meditation, and intuition.

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⁴⁰ *La Mort*, Chap. XI, Sec. 5.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Chap. XII, Sec. 5.

THE SOURCE OF AN ERROR IN ROUSSEAU'S
DICTIONNAIRE DE MUSIQUE

By EDWARD ROSEN

The subject of music in Diderot's *Encyclopédie* was allotted to Rousseau.¹ Jean-Jacques himself explained how he handled this assignment:

Je ne formai pas de moi-même cette entreprise, elle me fut proposée; on ajouta que le manuscrit entier de l'*Encyclopédie* devoit être complet avant qu'il en fût imprimé une seule ligne; on ne me donna que trois mois pour remplir ma tâche, & trois ans pouvoient me suffire à peine pour lire, extraire, comparer & compiler les Auteurs dont j'avois besoin: mais le zèle de l'amitié m'aveugla sur l'impossibilité du succès. Fidele à ma parole, aux dépens de ma réputation, je fis vite & mal, ne pouvant bien faire en si peu de tems; au bout de trois mois mon manuscrit entier fut écrit, mis au net & livré; je ne l'ai pas revu depuis... dès l'année 1750, le manuscrit est sorti de mes mains sans que je sache ce qu'il est devenu depuis ce tems-là.²

He devoted an article in the *Encyclopédie* to "si," the seventh note in the musical scale:

Si, en musique, est une des sept syllabes dont on se sert en France pour solfier les notes. Guy Arétin, en composant sa gamme, n'inventa que six de ces syllabes, quoique la gamme fût formée de sept notes: ce qui fit que pour nommer la septieme, il falloit à chaque instant changer les noms des autres notes, & les solfier de diverses manieres; embarras que nous n'avons plus depuis l'invention du si.

Brossard & plusieurs autres auteurs attribuent l'invention du si à un nommé le Maire, entre le milieu & la fin du dernier siècle; d'autres en font honneur à un certain Vander-Putten. ... A l'égard de Vander-Putten, je n'en puis rien dire, parce que je ne le connois point.³

Grieved by the defects of his contribution to the *Encyclopédie*, he published an improved version in a separate volume, *Dictionnaire de musique* (Paris, 1768).⁴ While revising and amplifying the *Encyclopédie* article on "si" for the *Dictionnaire*, he inserted the following fresh matter:

... le Cardinal Bona dit que dès l'onzième siècle, qui étoit celui de l'Arétin, Ericius Dupuis ajouta une Note aux six de Guy, pour éviter les difficultés des Muances, & faciliter l'étude du Chant.

Mais, sans s'arrêter à l'invention d'Ericius Dupuis, morte sans doute avec lui, ou sur laquelle Bona, plus récent de cinq siècles, a pu se tromper. ...

¹ "Celui-ci [Diderot] voulut me faire entrer pour quelque chose dans cette seconde entreprise [*Encyclopédie*], et me proposa la partie de la musique, que j'acceptai. ..." (Rousseau, *Confessions*, VII, next to the last paragraph.)

² *Dictionnaire de musique*, Préface, dated December 20, 1764.

³ In the first edition of the *Encyclopédie* this article occurs at page 147 of volume XV, which was not published until 1765.

⁴ *Dict. de musique*, Préface: "Blessé de l'imperfection de mes articles, à mesure que les volumes de l'*Encyclopédie* paroissent, je résolu de refondre le tout sur mon brouillon, et d'en faire à loisir un ouvrage à part traité avec plus de soin."

Because this statement about Dupuis was absent from the manuscript which Rousseau delivered in 1750 to Diderot, it did not appear in the *Encyclopédie*. But there, as we saw just above, Jean-Jacques openly admitted his complete ignorance about "a certain Van der Putten." Somehow he failed to realize that the "Van der Putten" of his *Encyclopédie* article, as well as the "Dupuis" of his *Dictionnaire* article, were simply variant names currently used for the Flemish humanist Erycius Puteanus (1574-1646). This oversight promptly evoked the sharpest censure from a German abbot:

Rousseau brings into the world a certain somebody or other Van der Putten, who is however nobody but Puteanus. He also dreams up someone else, Erycius Dupuis (who is this same Puteanus, as he could easily have guessed, for the practice of freely transforming names is frequent among the French). Furthermore, by a stupider mistake he declares that this Dupuis is called by Cardinal Bona a contemporary of Guido d'Arezzo. But he was fooled by the words *hoc item saeculo*, by which Bona understands the century in which he himself lived, the seventeenth.⁵

Cardinal Giovanni Bona (1609-1674) had in fact used language that was rather apt to distort the chronology in the mind of any reader who had never heard of Puteanus:

In the year 1022 a Benedictine monk, Guido d'Arezzo, with the highest approval of everybody, propounded a new system of music, new clefs, and the so-called hand with the six familiar notes. As a result, an inexperienced and semi-literate boy learned in a few months what a mature man possessed of a good mind could scarcely have learned in several years. For the chant was very difficult prior to Guido, and now stammering boys learn it without any trouble. In this century, moreover (*Hoc item saeculo*), Erycius Puteanus, a very learned man of high attainment in every field of study, in two small published books tried to add to the six familiar notes a seventh. His purpose was to eliminate all the mutations of syllables which cause most of the trouble for boys learning the chant, and in this way to make it much easier to master music.⁶

Late in the nineteenth century a German musical lexicon, unaffected

⁵ Martin Gerbert, *De cantu et musica sacra* (St. Blaise, 1774), II, 276: "ROUSSEAU praeterquam quod, nescio, quem certum *Van der Putten*, qui tamen ipissimus PUTEANUS est, in orbem protrudat; non solum alium fingit *Erycium* DUPUIS (quem facile licentia *Gallis* familiari alterandi nomina, PUTEANUM eundem esse divinare potuisset) sed crassiori errore eum ipsum etiam GUIDONI Aretino a Card. BONA coaevum dici, asserit his deceptus verbis *hoc item saeculo*: quis tamen BONA suum, quo vixit, saeculum decimum septimum intelligit."

⁶ *Psallentis ecclesiae harmonia*, xvii, 3 (Rome, 1653), pp. 449-50; revised, with title changed to *De divina psalmodia* (Paris, 1663), p. 422; reprinted under this latter title in Bona's *Opera omnia* (Antwerp, 1677, p. 878; Antwerp, 1723, p. 536; and half a dozen other editions): "Guido Aretinus Monachus S. Benedicti anno Domini vigesimo secundo supra millesimum maxima omnium admiratione novam musicae rationem, novasque claves edocuit, & manum quam vocant cum sex vulgaribus notis, adeo ut puer rudis & semigrammaticus paucis mensibus addiceret, quod homo grandaevis, magnoque pollens ingenio vix pluribus annis addiscere potuisset. Erat enim ante ipsum difficillimus cantus, quem nunc balbutientes pueri nullo negotio ediscunt. Hoc item saeculo Erycius Puteanus vir eruditissimus, & omni doctrina refertus duobus editis libellis ad sex vulgares notas septimam adjungere conatus est, ut omnes vocum mutationes tollantur, quae pueris majus negotium in cantu discendo facessunt; & hoc modo praxis musicae multo facilius reddatur."

by the harsh criticism directed at Rousseau during his lifetime, still treated the imaginary "Dupuis" as a contemporary of Guido.⁷ Whenever this blunder remained uncorrected, the mythical Dupuis of the eleventh century could not, of course, be merged with the real Puteanus of the seventeenth century. Moreover, wherever the original Flemish form of the latinized name Puteanus was thought to refer to an individual other than the humanist, the Dupuis-Puteanus couple attracted a third member called Van der Putten or something of that sort. The blame for creating this strange solar system of two ghostly satellites revolving around the single historical personality of Puteanus has been laid squarely at Rousseau's door.⁸

Before considering whether the citizen of Geneva is properly to be taxed with this responsibility, it is instructive to note that the identical accusation has been hurled at Bona also.⁹ But a glance at the relevant passage on page 142, above, instantly discloses that Bona is not guilty as charged, since he spoke only of a single Puteanus without any Flemish or gallicized counterpart. A third writer to be subjected to the same attack is Léonard Poisson, author of the anonymous *Traité théorique et pratique du plain-chant* (Paris, 1750).¹⁰ In the parallel columns just below, a sentence from Poisson stands at the left, while at the right I repeat the remark by Rousseau, already quoted above, which lies at the heart of our inquiry.

POISSON

Le Cardinal Bona dit, que ce fut dans le même siècle (l'onzième) qu'Eriicus Dupuis ajouta une note aux six de Guy pour éviter les difficultés des *Muances* & faciliter l'étude du Chant (*Traité*, p. 40).

ROUSSEAU

... le Cardinal Bona dit que dès l'onzième siècle, qui étoit celui de l'Arétin, Eriicus Dupuis ajouta une Note aux six de Guy, pour éviter les difficultés des *Muances*, & faciliter l'étude du Chant (*Dict. de musique*, s.v. *Si*).

⁷ Hermann Mendel, *Musikalisches Conversations-lexikon*, 2nd ed. (Berlin, 1880-87), III, 279: "Dupuis, Eriicus, ein zu Guido von Arezzo's Zeiten lebender Tonkünstler..."

⁸ Georg Lange, *Sammelbände der internationalen Musikgesellschaft*, I (1899-1900), 586: "Es möge blos an den einen Namen Puteanus erinnert werden, der in drei Formen als Puteanus, van der Putten oder de Putte und Dupuy eine Zeit lang auf zwei bis drei verschiedene Personen übertragen worden ist, ein Irrtum, den Rousseau durch eine falsche Übersetzung einer Stelle bei Bona ins Leben gerufen hat."

⁹ Ernest David and Mathis Lussy, *Histoire de la notation musicale* (Paris, 1882), p. 128: "Trompé par ces trois noms, le cardinal Bona en a fait trois personnes différentes."

¹⁰ Stéphen Morelot, *Revue de la Musique Religieuse, Populaire et Classique*, III (1847), 304: "l'abbé Poisson, dans son *Traité de plain-chant*, se fondant sur le même passage [of Bona], laisse indécise la question de savoir si l'honneur de cette réforme [the addition of the seventh syllable to Guido's six] appartient à Van Putte, à Erycius Puteanus ou à M. Dupuy!" Morelot's attack on Poisson was quoted with evident approval by Edmond Vander Straeten, *La Musique aux Pays-Bas avant le XIX^e siècle* (Brussels, 1867-88), VI, 56. But Morelot and Vander Straeten did not support this onslaught against Poisson with a specific page reference, for the understandable reason that there is no such passage. Since the poor cleric already stands arraigned before the bar of history, why pad his indictment with the misdeeds of others?

These two texts are so nearly identical that they obviously could not have been written independently of each other. Plainly enough, Rousseau extracted this sentence from Poisson, and incorporated it almost word for word in his *Dictionnaire*. Hence it was not the Genevan who misinterpreted Bona. The original culprit was Poisson, who forged the first link in a comic chain of errors. It was Poisson who converted the Fleming Puteanus (as the name was given by Bona) into a Dupuis. It was Poisson who misunderstood *Hoc item seculo* to mean the eleventh, instead of the seventeenth, century. It was Poisson, therefore, who was the immediate source of this error in Rousseau's *Dictionnaire de musique*.

But if Jean-Jacques must be found innocent of the accusation that he mistranslated Bona and thereby originated a persistent historical confusion, he must surely stand trial for a different offense. Why did he cite Bona by name as his authority, when in fact he appropriated an excerpt from Poisson's (faulty) French paraphrase of Bona's Latin? To answer this question, let us recall under what circumstances he composed the *Dictionnaire de musique*, as he himself tells the story in the preface:

J'étois, en recommençant ce travail, à portée de tous les secours nécessaires. Vivant au milieu des Artistes & des Gens-de-Lettres, je pouvois consulter les uns & les autres. M. l'Abbé Sallier me fournissoit, de la Bibliothèque du Roi, les livres & manuscrits dont j'avois besoin. . . .

Ma retraite à la campagne m'ôta toutes ces ressources, au moment que je commençois d'en tirer parti. . . . Convaincu, cependant, de l'utilité du travail que j'avois entrepris, je m'y remettois de tems à autre, mais toujours avec moins de succès. . . . Enfin, désespérant d'être jamais à portée de mieux faire, & voulant quitter pour toujours des idées dont mon esprit s'éloigne de plus en plus, je me suis occupé, dans ces Montagnes, à rassembler ce que j'avois fait à Paris & à Montmorency; &, de cet amas indigeste, est sorti l'espèce de Dictionnaire qu'on voit ici.

If Rousseau omitted to consult Bona as a test of Poisson's reliability, then he shirked an elementary obligation of a conscientious writer. But it would seem more likely that at the village of Môtiers, high up in the Swiss Alps, no copy of Bona was available to him. In that case, by citing Bona alone instead of Bona *apud* Poisson, he may have thought to gain by avoiding a cumbersome expression, but he lost by leaning on a broken reed.

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UNFERTH

By HENRY BOSLEY WOOLF

In a thoughtful article entitled "*Beowulf* and the Classical Epic," James R. Hulbert, remarking on the pettiness and triviality of the action now and then engaged in by the epic heroes of Greece and Rome, not long ago commented:

By contrast, the consistent nobility of speech and action in all the characters in *Beowulf* (except Unferth, of course) is refreshing to the readers of our times.¹

This parenthetical mention of Unferth touches on a point that many another student of *Beowulf* has made—the difference in tone between the Unferth episode and the rest of the poem. Gummere, for example, finds Unferth's taunt "a strange survival in epic by the side of the courtly and extravagant compliments exchanged between *Beowulf* and *Hrothgar*";² and to Klaeber it "contrasts strangely with the dignified courtesy reigning at *Hrothgar's* court."³

It is not my intention to dispute so well-founded a view as this, for there is no denying that the air of dignity which permeates the poem is broken by the debate carried on between Unferth and *Beowulf* in the hearing of the Danish court. But investigation reveals that students of *Beowulf* have, in the past, confined themselves too exclusively to the one passage where the Geat and Unferth first meet, and have accordingly neglected those other parts of the poem where further reference is made to Unferth. The *Beowulf* poet, indeed, takes no little care in the matter introduced into those passages that are aside from the main course of his story—witness such allusions as those to Sigemund and Heremod; and though it may seem that Unferth figures in an episode that is a highly interesting but somewhat unnecessary digression which contrasts sharply with what precedes and follows it, the fact that he is mentioned four times in later stages of the poem makes it probable that his role was not without significance in the eyes of the eighth-century poet. After all, *Beowulf* is the creation of a skilled artist who knew what he was doing (a fact, perhaps, too often overlooked), and it is quite unlikely that there was not some definite artistic purpose behind his use of Unferth in the poem.⁴ What that purpose was I hope to show in the pages that follow.

Beowulf has not been long in Denmark after the sea voyage from

¹ *MP*, XLIV (1946), 74.

² *The Oldest English Epic* (New York, 1909), p. 45.

³ *Beowulf*, 3rd ed. (Boston, 1936), p. 149.

⁴ The best criticism that I know treating of *Beowulf* as a work of art is J. R. R. Tolkien's "*Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics*," *Proceedings of the British Academy*, XXII (1936), 245-95. The illuminating interpretation of the poem to be found in this lecture is based on the idea that *Beowulf* must be examined for what it is, not for what various scholars have made of it, since the poem itself is the only tangible evidence we have of the intention of the author.

his Geatish home. On landing, he satisfies the coast guard of his good intentions; and on reaching Heorot, he immediately makes a favorable impression on the herald, Wulfgar, who soon ushers him into the presence of the king. In a formal speech Beowulf reveals to Hrothgar the purpose of his visit, and the aged ruler fittingly replies. Then, after a brief account of the festivities in the hall, the poet introduces Unferth:

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 499 | Unferð maþelode, | Ecglāfes bearn, |
| | þe æt fōtum sæt | frēan Scyldinga, |
| | onband beadurūne— | wæs him Bēowulfes sið, |
| | mōdges merefaran, | micel æþþunca, |
| | forþon þe hē ne ūþe, | þæt ænig oðer man |
| | æfre mārða þon mā | middangeardes |
| 505 | gehæde under heofenum | þonne hē sylfa. |

The first point to be noted in these lines concerns the name *Unferth*, which is of an uncommon sort that was probably not understood by the scribe to whom the inherited text is due.⁵ It is descriptive of its bearer, an aptonym, for it becomes apparent that Unferth is the very negation of peace once he commences to speak. Further, Unferth is said to be the son of Ecglaf, who is otherwise unknown; it may be pointed out, however, that the names of these two are joined by the traditional Germanic practice of alliteration. Then too, Unferth is a person of some standing at the Danish court, for he is described as sitting at Hrothgar's feet, though it is not clear what his duties are or what office he holds.⁶ Finally, his disposition is commented on, the poet's remarks on this subject significantly filling four and a half of these seven lines. He is a man in whom envy and jealousy are strong, and so he is not happy over Beowulf's coming to Denmark. He does not want any man to surpass him in the achieving of fame.

Unferth's speech, which extends more than twenty lines,⁷ follows logically from what is set forth in the introductory passage that precedes it. It is what one would expect from a man named Unferth, from one who is uneasy lest he be exceeded in valor, and it could hardly have been spoken by anyone not in a position of some importance. The burden of Unferth's remarks is, briefly, this: Are you the Beowulf who out of pride and foolhardiness engaged in a swimming match with Breca, who could not be dissuaded from your venture,

⁵ That the name caused difficulty for the tenth-century scribe is evident from the fact that emendation is necessary in each of its four occurrences in the poem. For comments on the name itself, see Axel Olrik, *The Heroic Legends of Denmark*, trans. Lee M. Hollander (New York, 1919), p. 57, and H. M. Chadwick, *The Heroic Age* (Cambridge, 1912), pp. 159-60. Klaeber, *ed. cit.*, p. cxviii, suggests that the name may have been coined by the poet himself.

⁶ Discussions of Unferth's position may be found in L. M. Larson's *The King's Household in England before the Norman Conquest* (Madison, 1904), pp. 120-21, and B. C. Williams' *Gnomic Poetry in Anglo-Saxon* (New York, 1914), pp. 72-78. That Unferth's role was that of court exorcist, an idea developed by D. E. Martin Clarke, "The Office of Thyle in *Beowulf*," *RES*, XII (1936), 61-66, seems so far-fetched as hardly to warrant mention.

⁷ Lines 506-28.

and who after seven nights was overcome by a stronger opponent? The son of Beanstan truly carried out his boast with you! Therefore, though you be strong in battle, I expect a worse issue from you if you dare await Grendel the space of a night.

Beowulf is ready with an answer, the longest speech found thus far in the poem.⁸ First of all, he suggests that Unferth has spoken with a tongue loosened by drink, and then he says of himself:

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------|----------------------|
| 532 | | Sōð ic talige, |
| | þæt ic merestrenge | māran āhte, |
| 534 | earfeþo on ȝþum, | ðonne ænig oþer man. |

And he continues, setting straight the facts about his youthful venture with Breca:

- | | | |
|-----|------------------|-----------------------|
| 535 | Wit þæt gecwædon | cnihtwesende |
| | ond gebæotedon | —wæron bēgen þā gīt |
| | on geogoðfēore— | þæt wit on gārsecg ūt |
| 538 | aldrum nēðdon, | ond þæt geæfndon swā. |

There was no contest at all, as Unferth would have it, but rather a foolish boast made by two boys to risk their lives in the sea. And the boast was carried out.⁹ After observing that he and his companion were properly equipped with unsheathed swords as a defense against sea monsters, Beowulf makes yet clearer the fact that he does not look upon the swimming venture as a contest:

- | | | |
|-----|------------------|-----------------------|
| 541 | | Nō hē wiht fram mē |
| | flōðȝþum feor | flēotan meahte, |
| 543 | hrafōr on holme, | nō ic fram him wolde. |

Breca could not swim away from him; he would not swim away from Breca. Thus Beowulf's own sea strength, referred to but ten lines before, is given specific illustration. Then follows an account of their separation, which occurred after they had been swimming together five days and which was brought about by a storm that stirred up the waters, aroused the sea beasts, and led them to attack Beowulf. But the Geat was more than their equal, an outcome that naturally follows from what Beowulf had told Hrothgar of his youthful exploits,¹⁰ and that anticipates the fights to come, especially the encounter with Grendel's dam, where skill in swimming and the overcoming of water monsters are a prelude to the combat in the cave. Indeed, the number of lines devoted to Beowulf's description of his struggles with the creatures of the sea is evidence enough of the poet's purpose here.¹¹

⁸ Lines 530-606.

⁹ There is in these lines an overtone of apology for a venture that now seems foolish to the mature hero, as is pointed out by Kemp Malone, "Young Beowulf," *JEGP*, XXXVI (1937), 21-23.

¹⁰ Lines 415 ff.

¹¹ No one seems to have caught this point before W. W. Lawrence, "The Breca Episode in *Beowulf*," *Kittredge Anniversary Papers* (Boston, 1913), pp. 359-66.

ability to put a stop to it? Were they aware of Beowulf's superiority to all living men and therefore reluctant to take offense? Were they secretly pleased to see Unferth, the sharp-witted courtier, bested in the field where he had hitherto excelled? The poet, however, is silent on these matters, and so conjecture about them is useless.

Thus far in the poem Unferth has served as an admirable foil to Beowulf, a figure employed by the poet to achieve characterization through contrast.¹² His ill-tempered outburst, his shady past, his lack of courage are all the antithesis of Beowulf. And alongside this, the debate is important for reemphasizing the strength of the Geat and so anticipating the future course of the poem. But Unferth does not disappear at this point, and it is necessary to turn now to the later passages where he is mentioned.¹³

Beowulf overcomes Grendel, and in the morning the Danes flock around Heorot to examine the monster's arm. After a journey to the mere, Hrothgar praises Beowulf, and the Geat makes fitting reply. Thereupon Unferth is referred to:

980 ðā wæs swīgra secg, sunu Ec[g]lāfes,
 on gylpspræce gūðgeweorca,
 siþðan æþelingas eorles cræfte
 ofer hēanne hrōf hand scēawedon,
 984 fēondes fingras.

The man who, the day before, had been quarrelsome is now silent, for Beowulf has matched word with deed. Though the significance of this silence may not be immediately apparent to the reader, it is clear that Unferth now knows that he has been surpassed in action, just as on the preceding evening he was overcome in talk. There is, at the moment, little that he can say in view of Beowulf's heroic achievement.

In the account of the celebration that takes place at Heorot later in the day, the poet again mentions Unferth:

1165 Swylce þær Unferþ þyle
 æt fōtum sæt frēan Scyldinga; gehwylc hiora his
 ferhþe trēowde,
 þæt hē hæfde mōd micel, þeah þe hē his māgum
 nære
 1168 ārfæst æt ecga gelācum.

¹² That the *Beowulf* poet makes skillful use of contrast has, of course, been variously noted, but by no one more effectively than Joan Blomfield, "The Style and Structure of *Beowulf*," *RES*, XIV (1938), 396-403.

¹³ Parallels to Beowulf's reception at the Danish court have been cited from the literature of various races and ages. See, for example, Klaeber, *ed. cit.*, p. 149; J. A. Work, "Odyssean Influence on the *Beowulf*," *PQ*, IX (1930), 399-402; T. B. Haber, *A Comparative Study of the "Beowulf" and the "Aeneid"* (Princeton, 1931), pp. 106-10; C. O. Chapman, "*Beowulf* and *Apollonius of Tyre*," *MLN*, XLVI (1931), 439-43.

Klaeber, *ed. cit.*, p. 150, suggests that the poet may have been working with a freer hand in these later passages where Unferth appears, in which case the transformation of character that he undergoes is the work of the *Beowulf* poet himself; hence their importance to this study.

These lines contain nothing pertinent to the relationship between Beowulf and Unferth. Rather, the poet again points out the importance of Unferth's position at the Danish court, goes on to say that both Hrothgar and Hrothulf trust him, and mentions his questionable past, which Beowulf made telling use of in his reply to Unferth's taunt. There has been no little discussion of this passage in connection with future events that take place in Denmark after Heorot has been cleansed; specifically, the clash within the royal family brought about by Hrothulf. In view of the poet's careful workmanship, it is not unlikely that the reference to Unferth here is designed to link him with the Danish civil war, but, it must be admitted, there is no sure proof of this.¹⁴

The joy of the Danes, however, is brief, for on the night following the defeat of Grendel a second monster appears. That the Danes should call upon Beowulf to rescue them anew is natural, and it is equally as expected that the Geat should willingly undertake the venture. But Unferth's action as Beowulf prepares to plunge into the sea in quest of Grendel's dam is rather surprising:

- 1455 Næs þæt þonne mættost mægenfultuma,
 þæt him on ðearfe lāh ǣyle Hrōðgāres;
 wæs þāæn hæftmēce Hrunting nama;
 þæt wæs ān foran ealdgestrēona;
 ecg wæs iren, ātertānum fāh,
 1460 āhyrdeð heaþoswāte; nāfre hit æt hilde ne swāc
 manna āngum þāra þe hit mid mundum bewand,
 sē ðe gryresīðas gegān dorste,
 folcstede fāra; næs þæt forma sīð,
 þæt hit ellenweorc æfnan scolde.
 1465 Hūru ne gemunde mago Ecglāfes
 eafōes cræftig, þæt hē ær gespræc
 wine druncen, þā hē þæs wæpnas onlāh
 sēlran sweordfrecan; selfa ne dorste
 under yða gewin aldre genēþan,
 1470 drihtscype drēogan; þær hē dōme forlēas,
 ellenmārðum. Ne wæs þāæn oðrum swā,
 1472 syðþan hē hine tō gūðe gegyred hæfde.

Unferth here unquestionably recognizes his superior, for the original antagonism has turned, at last, to respect. As every student of the early Germans knows, the sword was one of the most precious possessions of a warrior: it was handed down as a valuable heirloom; its history was remembered; it was often dignified with a name. So Unferth's action here takes on added significance. Since it turns out that the sword is powerless against Grendel's dam, and since it might therefore be concluded that Unferth was engaging in treachery when he lent Hrunting to Beowulf, the poet is at some pains to point out

¹⁴ For discussions of this point, see R. W. Chambers, *Beowulf: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1932), pp. 27-29; W. W. Lawrence, *Beowulf and Epic Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass., 1928), pp. 76-77; Kemp Malone, "Hrethric," *PMLA*, XLII (1927), 302-04.

the excellence of the weapon. Further, now that he is rehabilitating the character of Unferth, the poet, though not too satisfactorily, explains his rude outburst shortly after Beowulf's arrival at the king's hall: Unferth was drunk. Beowulf, of course, was aware of this, though it did not prevent his replying to the charges brought against him. Now though, the poet states, Unferth's mind is crystal clear as he lends Beowulf his sword; indeed, Unferth does not even remember what he had earlier said, when his innermost feelings were unchecked and his tongue was set wagging by drink. Still, the poet concludes, Unferth is not the brave man that he would like to be considered, for he would not dare undertake what Beowulf is about to venture upon.

In his speech of thanks Beowulf makes clear his generosity and his willingness to forgive his recent antagonist. Having asked Hrothgar to look after his retainers and to send his newly won treasures to Hygelac in the event that Grendel's dam is the victor in the fight shortly to begin, he singles out Unferth as the one Dane to receive a gift:

- 1488 Ond þū Unferð læt ealde lāfe,
 wrætlic wāgsweord widcūðne man
 heardecg habban; ic mē mid Hruntinge
 1491 dōm gewyrce, oþðe mec deað nimeð!

Hrunting, or any other sword that Beowulf might have taken with him into the depths of the sea, is useless against Grendel's mother; so, in case the reader is not yet convinced of Unferth's good faith, the poet adds to what has already been said of the superior qualities of Unferth's sword:

- 1525 ðolode ær fela
 hondgemōta, helm oft gescær,
 fāges fyrdhrægl; ðā wæs forma sið
 1528 dēorum mādme, þæt his dōm ālæg.

And Beowulf's own comment, when he returns victorious from the deep, clinches the point:

- 1659 Ne meahte ic æt hilde mid Hruntinge
 1660 wiht gewyrcean, þeah þæt wæpen dūge.

Finally, when Hrothgar has finished his long moralizing speech to Beowulf, the Geat turns to Unferth:

- 1807 Heht þā se hearda Hrunting beran
 sunu Ecglāfes, heht his sweord niman,
 lēoflic iren; sægde him þæs lēanes þanc,
 cwæð, hē þone gūðwine gōdne tealde,
 wīgcræftigne, nales wordum lōg
 1812 mēces ecge; þæt wæs mōdig secg.

Though at last mention the sword was lying on the floor of the cave in which Beowulf had killed Grendel's dam, it is now clear that, along with Grendel's head and the hilt of the wondrous weapon with which the Geat had overcome his most recent foe, it was brought back to

Heorot. Now Beowulf commands that Hrunting be returned to Unferth, and in thanking him for the loan of it he declares that it is an excellent sword and in no way finds fault with it, despite its failure in his need.¹⁵ And that, the poet concludes, was a man of spirit!

What, then, is Unferth's function in the poem? As I have shown elsewhere,¹⁶ the first seven fits of *Beowulf* contain ample proof of the poet's skillful use of various direct and indirect means of characterizing his hero; and as I read the Unferth passages, I am increasingly convinced that they exist chiefly for further characterizing the Geat. Challenged somewhat unexpectedly by an important official of the Danish court, who serves him as an admirable foil, Beowulf in an extended speech reveals courage of a genuine sort; for his narrative of the venture with Breca emphasizes his physical strength, and the sureness and confidence with which he quiets his taunter are indicative of his spiritual resources. And the eagerness with which Hrothgar hears Beowulf win the debate and reassert his intention of encountering Grendel, though the heroism of the Danes themselves is not praised, adds to the Geat's stature. Thus the Unferth episode completes the characterization of Beowulf before the first of the great fights. The poet, however, is not content to stop his characterization at this point, and the other passages treating Unferth are of interest for revealing the change that comes about in Unferth, a transformation effected by Beowulf alone. When Grendel is overcome, the courtier is silent. When Beowulf expresses his willingness to seek out the second monster, Unferth offers him the use of what was probably his most prized possession. Though he might well have been suspicious and so refused the sword, Beowulf gladly takes it and arranges for a gift to the man if he does not return from the sea. Then, having killed Grendel's dam, Beowulf returns Hrunting to its owner; there is only praise for it, even though the weapon was useless.

There is, after all, no better way of finding out what sort of person a man is than by observing his influence on others, and this the *Beowulf* poet, who was endowed with penetrating psychological gifts, has clearly illustrated by his description of the change brought about in Unferth by the Geat. It is a change, too, that takes place gradually. Openly hostile at first, Unferth passes through a stage of silence until, at last, he expresses his admiration for a braver man than he is by offering Beowulf his sword. Thus the reader becomes fully aware of the impact made by the Geat on the one man among the Danes who was least heroic, least like himself.

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¹⁵ There have been varied interpretations of this passage, the chief point of difference being the reference of *se hearda*. I have followed J. Hoops, *Kommmentar zum Beowulf* (Heidelberg, 1932), p. 196, where a discussion of other readings may be found.

¹⁶ "On the Characterization of Beowulf," *ELH*, XV (1948), 85-92.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF GENTILLET'S *CONTRE-MACHIAVEL*

By IRVING RIBNER

Since the appearance of Edward Meyer's great study,¹ it has been accepted as commonplace among literary historians that the "Machiavel" of the Elizabethan drama developed as the result of the false impressions of Machiavelli's political thought disseminated in England by the *Contre-Machiavel* of Innocent Gentillet.² Mario Praz, in his British Academy lecture of 1928, attempted to mitigate the importance of Gentillet's influence by pointing out that the Machiavelli legend was already current in Europe long before the appearance of the *Contre-Machiavel*, which was only one of many expressions of anti-Machiavellian feeling.³ Hans Beck, in his 1935 Bonn doctoral dissertation, followed Praz and attributed the Elizabethan misunderstanding of Machiavelli to historical and sociological influences, rather than to the *Contre-Machiavel*.⁴ But, in spite of these modifications, the tradition established by Meyer has held strong. Nadja Kempner repeated it,⁵ and even more recently, it has been echoed by Thomas Hugh Jameson,⁶ Jean Robertson,⁷ and James Emerson Phillips.⁸

The notion has been carried on by Boyer,⁹ Lewis,¹⁰ and Weissberger.¹¹ It has been carried on in spite of the seeming inconsistency of attributing so great a force in Elizabethan letters to a foreign polemical document which, although probably translated in 1577, did not appear in print until 1602. Recent investigation of the Machiavellian problem makes it necessary that Meyer's allegation be more

¹ Edward Meyer, "Machiavelli and the Elizabethan Drama," *Literarhistorische Forschungen*, I (1897), 1-180.

² Innocent Gentillet, *Discours sur les Moyens de bien gouverner et maintenir en bon poix un Royaume ou autre Principauté: Divisé en trois parties; à savoir, du Conseil, de la Religion et Police que doit tenir un Prince: Contre Nicholas Machiavel, Florentin. A Treshaut et Tres illustre Prince Francois Duc d'Alencon fils et frère de Roy* (Paris, 1576).

³ Mario Praz, "Machiavelli and the Elizabethans," *Proceedings of the British Academy*, XIV (1928), 49-97.

⁴ Hans Beck, *Machiavellismus in der englischen Renaissance* (Duisburg, 1935), pp. 5-7.

⁵ Nadja Kempner, *Raleghs Staatstheoretische Schriften. Die Einführung des Machiavellismus in England* (Leipzig, 1928), pp. 23-25.

⁶ Thomas Hugh Jameson, "The Machiavellianism of Gabriel Harvey," *PMLA*, LVI (1941), 645-56.

⁷ Jean Robertson, "Nicholas Breton and *The Uncasing of Machivils Instructions to His Sonne*," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, IV (1940-41), 477.

⁸ James Emerson Phillips, *The State in Shakespeare's Greek and Roman Plays* (New York, 1940), pp. 31 ff.

⁹ C. V. Boyer, *The Villain as Hero in Elizabethan Tragedy* (London, 1914), pp. 36 ff.

¹⁰ Wyndham Lewis, *The Lion and the Fox* (New York, 1927), p. 71 et passim.

¹¹ L. Arnold Weissberger, "Machiavelli and Tudor England," *Political Science Quarterly*, XLII (1927), 589 ff.

thoroughly examined, and that the exact importance of Gentillet's work in English literary history be more carefully determined.

When Meyer came to his historic conclusion, it was upon the supposition that there were no translations of either *The Prince* or *The Discourses* before those of Edward Dacres in 1640 and 1636 respectively. He tells us that he came upon Gentillet's work "while ransacking the British Museum,"¹² and connecting that discovery with the great inaccuracy of Elizabethan dramatic references to Machiavelli and with the absence, to his knowledge, of any English translations, he evolved the very plausible hypothesis which was taken up so readily by later writers.

What might have spoiled his hypothesis was the knowledge that both *The Prince* and *The Discourses* had been widely translated into English before 1600. We know this now through the recent investigations of Napoleone Orsini and Hardin Craig. There were at least three separate translations of *The Prince*, each completely distinct from that of Dacres, and they are now extant in seven manuscripts, five in the British Museum, one in the library of Queens College, Oxford, and one in the library of Mr. Jules Furthman of Los Angeles.¹³ Orsini has also located in the British Museum a manuscript containing a translation of *The Discourses* dated 1599,¹⁴ and there is every reason to suppose that there were others. All of these manuscripts were evidently widely circulated, and together with the surreptitious Italian editions published at great personal risk by John Wolfe,¹⁵ attest to the great popularity which Machiavelli's works themselves enjoyed and to the great eagerness with which they were sought.¹⁶

¹² Meyer, *loc. cit.*, p. x.

¹³ For a full description of these manuscripts see two studies by Napoleone Orsini: "Elizabethan Mss. Translations of Machiavelli's *Prince*," *Journal of The Warburg Institute*, I (1937), 166-69, and *Studi sul Rinascimento Italiano in Inghilterra* (Firenze, 1937), pp. 1-19. See also Hardin Craig, ed., *Machiavelli's Prince: An Elizabethan Translation* (Chapel Hill, 1944), pp. xiii-xxxii.

¹⁴ Napoleone Orsini, "Machiavelli's *Discourses*, a Mss. Translation of 1599," *London Times Literary Supplement*, October 10, 1936, p. 820.

¹⁵ These editions are fully described by Adolph Gerber in *Niccolo Machiavelli, die Handschriften, Ausgaben und Übersetzungen Seiner Werke in 16 und 17 Jahrhunderts* (Gotha, 1912), II, 83-85. See also Adolph Gerber, "All of the Five Fictitious Italian Editions of Writings of Machiavelli and Three of Those of Pietro Aretino Printed by John Wolfe of London (1584-1588)," *MLN*, XXII (1907), 2-6, 129-35, 201-06.

¹⁶ It is needless for me to repeat here the many indications of Machiavelli's popularity in England long before the appearance of Gentillet's work. The story of Cardinal Reginald Pole's reading of *The Prince* in manuscript in 1527, upon the suggestion of Thomas Cromwell who had brought it with him from Italy, has been adequately told. See Grattan Freyer, "The Reputation of Machiavelli," *Hermathema*, LVI (1940), 154, and Lewis Einstein, *The Italian Renaissance in England* (New York, 1902), pp. 291-92. It has recently been shown that the French translation of *The Prince* of 1553 was dedicated to James Hamilton, 2nd Earl of Arran, a prominent member of the Scottish nobility. See John Purves, "First Knowledge of Machiavelli in Scotland," *La Rinascenta*, I (1938), 139-42. A German scholar in 1903 demonstrated that Machiavelli's name was common in English ballads long before 1576, and that it was used with the same connotation it was later to have in the great drama. See O. Ritter, "Machiavelli in England," *Englische Studien*, XXXIII (1903), 159-60.

It is thus evident that Elizabethans had adequate access to Machiavelli's own works, and that these works must have figured at least as prominently in the popular estimation of him as did any other element we can cite. This is the undeniable fact which most scholars thus far have failed to face; they have sought to explain the "Machiavel" on the basis of Gentillet's work rather than on that of Machiavelli himself. And of all of the factors which helped to build the monstrous legend with which his name was associated, Elizabethan acquaintance with his own works was the most important.

Machiavelli's great contribution to political thought lay in his divorce from it of all considerations of sentiment, morality, or Christian ethics. He made of politics an empirical science governed by laws of cause and effect, and he made his basic thesis the fact that only through understanding of that science could the greatest of all social goods be accomplished, and that greatest good to him was the unification of Italy and the establishment therein of a sound orderly government.¹⁷ Machiavelli was a completely moral man; his great goal was the unification of Italy and the establishment of a well-ordered state with the welfare of the populace as its first consideration. But he realized that before ethical and moral philosophy could be applied to politics, the political machine itself must be understood, and that it must be studied apart from morals. He thus concerned himself only with the scientific analysis of the political machine, and he left morals to others. He concerned himself not with what should be, but with what was.

To the men of the Renaissance this was something completely new and incomprehensible. The great political thinkers of the Middle Ages—St. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Dante, William of Ockham, John of Salisbury, Marsilius of Padua—had all been moralists. Political science had been speculation about what should be, rather than scientific analysis of what was. Machiavelli's contemporaries, reading his works without the historical perspective which enables us to understand them today, saw only this lack of moral consideration, and so they epitomized him as a completely immoral man. They failed also to realize that *The Prince* was an occasional work not meant to apply to conditions other than those of Italy in Machiavelli's day, and they

¹⁷ "The essence of Machiavelli's method lay in the removal from the realm of political science of all questions of sentiment and morality. His one consideration was of politics as a logical science of cause and effect which could only be adequately understood if moral considerations were left out of the question." Lord Acton, Introduction to Machiavelli, *Il Principe*, ed. L. Arthur Burd (Oxford, 1891), pp. 16-17.

"He is a realist as against the hordes of his thinking predecessors and contemporaries who dealt with politics in terms of the Christian ethic and of the methods of scholastic reasoning which were becoming increasingly inapplicable in the Renaissance world. . . . As an analyst, he ruthlessly swept aside the thick veil of irrelevancies with which men had clothed their naked souls." Thomas I. Cook, *History of Political Philosophy from Plato to Burke* (New York, 1936), p. 278.

judged it in the light of the great body of *De Regimine Principum* literature which was the legacy of the Middle Ages. Machiavelli thus became an inhuman monster, the advocate of all that was anti-Christ (whereas he had actually advocated nothing other than the unification of Italy), a virtual devil in human form, and Elizabethans needed no misrepresentations of his works, such as that of Gentillet, to create this portrait of him. To their understanding, his works themselves were sufficient to thus characterize him.¹⁸

The first reason, then, for the growth of the Machiavelli legend lay in the content of his works themselves and in the inability of the Elizabethan mind to see them in their proper perspective. The popular misinterpretation of Machiavelli's work was aided by the virulent attacks upon him by churchmen, both Catholic and Protestant. Villari has told of how Machiavelli was burned in effigy at Ingolstadt and of the bitter attacks upon him by Cardinal Pole, Caterino Politi, Bishop Osorio, Possevino, Ribadeneria, Clementi, Lucchesini, and a host of others too numerous to mention.¹⁹ Gentillet's was only one of the later of these, and if his work had any significance apart from its vituperative predecessors, it was in that it was the first Protestant attack and the first document to tie Machiavelli's doctrine to an actual political event, the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre.

Within the half century following the appearance of *The Prince* and *The Discourses*, Machiavelli's name had become a household word. That he was a political thinker began to sink into the background, although in intellectual circles his books were widely read. In the popular mind he became a symbol, at first for all that was evil, immoral, and anti-Christ, and then for the mysterious depths of Renaissance Italy. Robert Greene in England made a proper noun out of his name. It was bandied about as the synonym for devil, and the man became a mere symbol in the popular imagination.

And then the dramatists got hold of him, and he was exactly what they needed. In the popular imagination, "Machiavel" had come to symbolize all that was evil and repulsive, yet mysterious and attractive, in Renaissance Italy. It was a convenient tag and good theater, and men like Kyd and Marlowe capitalized upon it.

With the name they combined two traditions which were a part of the dramatic machinery of the age. The first of these has been commented upon by Boyer and Praz.²⁰ This was the Senecan drama

¹⁸ Elizabethan political writings were largely in the medieval moralistic tradition as Beck has shown in the case of George Buchanan (*op. cit.*, pp. 29-30) and Allen has shown in that of Richard Hooker. See J. W. Allen, *Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1928), pp. 184-98. There were, of course, exceptions such as William Thomas who showed in his writings a clear conception of Machiavelli's scientific method. See E. R. Adair, "William Thomas, a Forgotten Clerk of the Privy Council," *Tudor Studies*, ed. R. W. Seton-Watson (London, 1924), pp. 133-60.

¹⁹ Pasquale Villari, *Life and Times of Niccolò Machiavelli*, trans. Linda Villari (London, 1898), II, 185-233. See also Freyer, *loc. cit.*

²⁰ Boyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 14 ff.; Praz, *loc. cit.*, XIV, 63-71.

which, in plays like *Thyestes* and *Medea*, had had its "villain-hero," its plotting, murdering, fraudulent symbol of motiveless malignity. To this stock character, the Elizabethan dramatists attached the name "Machiavel," and so to the Senecan blood and revenge villain they attached all of the exoticism of Renaissance Italy. That this was what the public wanted is attested to by the overwhelming popularity of what soon became a new stock character.

The second tradition was that of the native Morality plays in which the devil was given human form. The "Machiavel" thus included not only the Senecan villain, but also the devil incarnate. An excellent illustration of this aspect may be found in Shakespeare's *Othello*, when Othello says of Iago:

I look down towards his feet—but that's a fable.
If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.²¹

Here is an obvious allusion to the cloven feet of the Machiavellian devil incarnate.

The stage "Machiavel" thus grew out of three elements: the Elizabethan inability to understand Machiavelli's method, which was aided by attacks upon it from the church; the Senecan "villain-hero"; and the devil-incarnate tradition of the native English drama. What then was the contribution of Gentillet's *Contre-Machiavel*?

We can only conclude that the *Contre-Machiavel* was merely one of the many church attacks upon Machiavelli which helped foster an already existent misconception. That it was among the most important of these attacks is possible, but its influence in the creation of the "Machiavel" could not have been as great as that which scholars have attributed to it. Marlowe's Barrabas and Kyd's Lorenzo probably would have been created whether or not Gentillet had ever written.

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²¹ *Othello*, V, ii, 285-86.

WILLIAM HAZLITT: BONAPARTIST CRITIC OF THE EXCURSION

By B. BERNARD COHEN

In 1817 William Hazlitt published *The Round Table*, a collection of some of his and Leigh Hunt's essays, most of which had appeared in *The Examiner*.¹ Among them Hazlitt presented a revised version of his earlier review (1814) of William Wordsworth's *The Excursion*.² It will be the aim of this study to point out three significant changes which Hazlitt made in the 1817 version of the review, to establish his chief motive for the alterations,³ and to relate to the review changes in reference to Wordsworth in other essays reprinted in *The Round Table*.

Recent scholars have considered Hazlitt's original review as very favorable to Wordsworth.⁴ It is indeed a skillful blending of negative criticism and high praise. For example, Hazlitt notes that Wordsworth has an "intense intellectual egotism" which "swallows up every thing"; that "the evident scope and tendency of Mr. Wordsworth's mind is the reverse of dramatic"; that the poem is burdened "with a load of narrative and description, which, instead of assisting, hinders the progress and effect of the general reasoning"; that he disagrees with the poet's narrow opinion that *Candide* is dull; that everything Wordsworth admitted to the poem had to be molded by his own interpretation; that he cannot agree with Wordsworth's attitude toward the French Revolution; that the poet's work in general has "all the internal power, without the external form of poetry"; and that he firmly rejects Wordsworth's admiration for and presentation of country people and their mode of life.⁵

¹ *The Round Table: A Collection of Essays on Literature, Men, and Manners* (Edinburgh, 1817), 2 vols. In the "Advertisement," dated January 5, 1817, Hazlitt wrote that he was responsible for forty of the fifty-two essays and that Hunt prepared the rest under the signatures of "L.H." and "H.T."

² The review first appeared in *The Examiner* in three parts: "Character of Mr. Wordsworth's New Poem, *The Excursion*" (August 21, 1814), pp. 541-42; "On Mr. Wordsworth's *Excursion*" (August 28, 1814), pp. 555-58; and "On Mr. Wordsworth's '*Excursion*'" (October 2, 1814), pp. 636-38. The last section is signed "W.H."

³ Most of the omissions and variations are recorded in *Collected Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. A. R. Waller and Arnold Glover (London, 1904), XI, 572-75. The editors comment as follows without documentation: "It is significant of Hazlitt's increasing bitterness (caused mainly, no doubt, by the final downfall of Napoleon) that the passages omitted from *The Round Table* are for the most part of a highly eulogistic character."

⁴ Professor George Maclean Harper states that with minor exceptions Hazlitt's "judgment of the poem as a whole and of Wordsworth's genius was highly favorable. . . ." See *William Wordsworth: His Life, Works, and Influences* (London, 1929), p. 530. William S. Ward lists the review as "preponderantly favorable." See "Wordsworth, The 'Lake' Poets, and Their Contemporary Magazine Critics, 1798-1820," *SP*, XLII (1945), 109, 110.

⁵ *The Examiner* (1814), pp. 542, 555, 556, 557-58, 636-38.

On the other hand, Hazlitt praises Wordsworth very flatteringly in three passages.⁶ He also points out that the natural setting of the poem is vast, magnificent, and overwhelming; that there are "splendid passages, equally enriched with philosophy and poetry"; that he agrees with Wordsworth's "general philippic against the contractedness and egotism of philosophical pursuits," but wishes that the criticism had been expanded; that Wordsworth "has described the love of nature better than any other poet"; and that he enjoys best the stories of the Whig and Jacobite friends, and of the good knight, Sir Alfred Irthing.⁷

Wordsworth, it seems, did not find much favorable comment in the review, although there is little reliable evidence to show his immediate reactions.⁸ It is certain, however, that the relationships between Wordsworth and Hazlitt, never very close, deteriorated rapidly after late 1814. The schism grew so wide that Hazlitt, when he prepared to reprint his review of *The Excursion* in *The Round Table*, revised it considerably: passages commending Wordsworth were removed entirely. Thus the fine balance of the original essay was upset; the final product was more heavily weighted with adverse criticism.

For *The Round Table*, Hazlitt left out three passages which praised Wordsworth very flatteringly.⁹ For example, he suppressed the first sentence of the 1814 version: "In power of intellect, in lofty conceptions, in the depth of feeling, at once simple and sublime, which pervades every part of it, and which gives to every object an almost

⁶ These passages are quoted and discussed below.

⁷ *The Examiner* (1814), pp. 541, 556-57, 636, 638.

⁸ There are two bits of evidence, neither of which can be accepted as facts. First, Hazlitt himself claims, no doubt with bias and exaggeration, that Wordsworth first heard the review when John Wilson read it to him. The poet was pleased until he discovered who its author was. Then his wrath exploded; he fell into "a fit of outrageous incredulity to think that he should be indebted for the first favourable account that had ever appeared of any work he had ever written to a person on whom he had conferred such great and unmerited obligations. I think that this statement will shew that there is very little love lost between me and my benefactor." From "A Reply to 'Z,'" written but not published in August or September, 1818, in reply to a scurrilous letter "Hazlitt Cross-Questioned," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, III (1818), 550-52. See *Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P. P. Howe (London and Toronto, 1930-1934), IX, 6, 249, and P. P. Howe, *Life of William Hazlitt* (London, 1922), pp. 261-62. Secondly, Wordsworth, it seems, wrote a letter to Charles Lamb shortly after Hazlitt's review had appeared, in which he asked Lamb not to associate with Hazlitt, and in which he revealed, perhaps for the first time, that Hazlitt had been driven from the Lake district because of his immoral conduct toward a young woman. This letter is lost, but Lamb's answer, in which he looks upon the entire matter as a joke, is available. See *Letters of Charles Lamb*, ed. E. V. Lucas (New Haven, 1935), II, 146; W. Carew Hazlitt, *Memoirs of William Hazlitt* (London, 1867), I, 105-06; Howe, *Life*, p. 79; Hesketh Pearson, *The Fool of Love: A Life of William Hazlitt* (New York, 1934), p. 38; and Catharine Macdonald Maclean, *Born Under Saturn: A Biography of William Hazlitt* (New York, 1944), p. 357.

⁹ Many revisions in the review are stylistic; however, the three to be cited here definitely represent a change of Hazlitt's opinion of *The Excursion* and of Wordsworth's genius, because the passages are lifted directly out of the first review, obviously not for stylistic improvements.

preternatural and preterhuman interest, this work has seldom been surpassed."¹⁰ Farther in the essay, he eliminated other lofty praise: "There is in his general sentiments and reflection on human life a depth, an originality, a truth, a beauty, and grandeur, both of conception and expression, which place him decidedly at the head of the poets of the present day, or rather which place him in a totally distinct class of excellence."¹¹ Finally, Hazlitt revised his conclusion completely. In 1814 he had written,

We conceive, that about as many fine things have passed through Mr. Wordsworth's mind, as, with five or six exceptions, through any human mind whatever. The conclusion of the passage we refer to is admirable, and comes in like some dying close in music:—[Lines 976-1007, Book VII, are then quoted].¹²

If Mr. Wordsworth does not always write in this manner, it is his own fault. He can as often as he pleases. It is not in our power to add to, or take away from, the pretensions of a poem like the present, but if our opinion or wishes could have any the least weight, we would take our leave of it by saying *Esto Perpetua!*¹³

In *The Round Table* he cut out this favorable conclusion and substituted part of the introduction of the original article:

Whether, as it is, this very original and powerful performance may not rather remain like one of those stupendous but half-finished structures, which have been suffered to moulder into decay, because the cost and labor attending them exceeded their use or beauty, we feel that it would be presumptuous in us to determine.¹⁴

No longer did Hazlitt exclaim about *The Excursion*, "*Esto Perpetua!*" No longer did the little praise which Dorothy Wordsworth had seen in the review appear.¹⁵

Obviously, between October, 1814, and January, 1817, Hazlitt's original estimate of *The Excursion* had changed somewhat. An examination of his writings during the time between the two versions of the review will reveal one excellent general reason why he removed three exceedingly complimentary passages from the essay published in *The Round Table*.

One of Hazlitt's chief criticisms of *The Excursion* centers on Wordsworth's change of attitude toward the French Revolution and its ideals from reverent hope to utter despair and disgust. Hazlitt felt that the aims of the Revolution were immortal. Passionately, he states, "we will never cease, nor be prevented from, returning on the wings of imagination to that brighter dream of our youth. . . ."¹⁶ Hazlitt's

¹⁰ *The Examiner* (August 21, 1814), p. 541. Cf. *The Round Table*, II, 95.

¹¹ *The Examiner* (August 28, 1814), p. 556. Cf. *The Round Table*, II, 99-101.

¹² Cf. *The Excursion, Being a Portion of the Recluse, A Poem* (London, 1814), pp. 354-55.

¹³ *The Examiner* (October 2, 1814), p. 638. Cf. *The Round Table*, II, 121-22.

¹⁴ *The Round Table*, II, 122. Cf. *The Examiner* (August 21, 1814), p. 541. This change is not recorded by Waller and Glover.

¹⁵ See her letter of November 11, 1814, in *Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Middle Years*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt (Oxford, 1937), II, 606.

¹⁶ *The Examiner* (August 28, 1814), p. 558. Cf. Howe, *Life*, pp. 173-75.

disagreement with Wordsworth's opinion is calm and reasoned, even polite; it is elevated by his own intense feelings about the Revolution.¹⁷

To Hazlitt, the French Revolution and the career of Napoleon Bonaparte were synonymous. He looked upon Napoleon as "the child and champion of the Revolution," as a destroyer of monarchs. Napoleon alone, reasoned Hazlitt, saved his people from the tyranny of the Bourbon family. He admitted that Napoleon made mistakes, but he felt that Bonaparte always acted faithfully in behalf of his people.¹⁸ As he saw Napoleon's star slowly sinking, Hazlitt suffered keen disappointment. He was an avowed Bonapartist; and with his pen as his chief weapon, he battled those who disagreed with his ideas. Consequently, he felt that Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey, all of whom had been enthusiastic supporters of the Revolution, had deserted the people and had turned to shelter themselves under the patronage of the King, or of men like Sir George Beaumont, the symbol to Hazlitt of the worst kind of political conservatism.¹⁹

In 1815 Wordsworth dedicated the collected edition of his poems to Sir George Beaumont. Hazlitt read there a sonnet in praise of King George III and of the triumph over Napoleon at Leipzig (October 16-19, 1813).²⁰ Immediately his polite political criticism in the 1814 review of *The Excursion* changed to lashing verbal blows. In an article on Milton's *Comus* (*The Examiner*, June 11, 1815), he began his war on Wordsworth's sonnet to the King, which to Hazlitt was a focal point in the poet's growing political conservatism:

We have no less respect for the memory of Milton as a patriot than as a poet. Whether he was a *true* patriot, we shall not inquire: he was at least a *consistent* one. He did not retract his defence of the people of England; he did not say that his sonnets to Vane or Cromwell were meant ironically; he was not appointed Poet Laureate [a reference to Southey] to a Court which he had reviled and insulted; he accepted neither place nor pension; nor did he write paltry sonnets

¹⁷ Hazlitt, no doubt, had in mind two other of Wordsworth's works, along with *The Excursion*: the political sonnets in *Poems in Two Volumes* (London, 1807), I, 125-52, and *Concerning the Relations of Great Britain, Spain, and Portugal, etc.* (London, 1809).

¹⁸ See Hazlitt's "Preface" to his *Life of Napoleon* in Howe, ed., *Works*, XIII, vii, ix-x. The original publishers of the biography (1828-1830) objected to the "Preface"; Hazlitt, however, placed it in the third volume of the work. Professor Howe has restored it to its proper position. See Howe, *Life*, pp. 395-96, and Geoffrey Keynes, *Bibliography of William Hazlitt* (London, 1931), pp. 96-97.

¹⁹ Much has been written concerning Hazlitt's attitude toward the French Revolution and Napoleon. For comments by his contemporaries, see *Henry Crabb Robinson on Books and Their Writers*, ed. Edith J. Morley (London, 1938), I, 153, 161-62, 164-65, and P. G. Patmore, *My Friends and Acquaintances* (London, 1854), II, 253, and III, 139-54. See also *Literary Remains of the Late William Hazlitt* (London, 1836), I, ciii-cviii; Augustine Birrell, *William Hazlitt* (New York, 1902), pp. 95-97; Myron F. Brightfield, *Scott, Hazlitt, and Napoleon*, University of California Publications in English, XIV (1943), 181-98; Pearson, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-43; and Maclean, *op. cit.*, pp. 285-341, 349-50.

²⁰ The sonnet "November, 1813" was written in 1813 and was placed last in the group of political sonnets of the 1815 edition. See *Poems by William Wordsworth* (London, 1815), II, 258, and Harper, *op. cit.*, pp. 532-33.

upon the "Royal fortitude" of the House of Stuart, by which, however, they really lost something.²¹

A footnote at the end of the essay implies that Wordsworth had suppressed "The Female Vagrant" from the 1815 edition because the poem was not consistent with his praise of the King.²² No longer did Hazlitt "differ a little from Mr. Wordsworth" as he had in 1814.²³ The political fight between the two authors was now launched!

Wordsworth responded privately to Hazlitt's attack. Crabb Robinson tells of a meeting with Wordsworth during which they discussed the "malignant attack" in *The Examiner*. "This led to Wordsworth's mentioning the cause of his coolness towards Hazlitt. It appears that Hazlitt, when at Keswick, narrowly escaped being ducked by the populace, and probably sent to prison for some gross attacks on women." Wordsworth helped Hazlitt escape the angry people of Keswick.²⁴ Thus, perhaps for the second time, Wordsworth revived the incident of the Lake district to combat Hazlitt's literary and political criticisms.²⁵

Hazlitt continued to lambast Wordsworth's sonnet at every opportunity he had. In a long footnote to a very innocent sentence which praises the grace of gypsies (*The Examiner*, August 27, 1815), he attacked the sonnet to King George III, Wordsworth's criticism of gypsies' idleness, his shift of poetic principles (with an implication that his political ideals had also altered), and his official government position as stamp distributor.²⁶ The over-all meaning that one receives from this footnote to an essay on manners is that Wordsworth had abandoned the common people, represented by the gypsies, for the protection, wealth, and power of the King. Hazlitt was obviously going out of his way to strike at Wordsworth.

When he reprinted this essay in *The Round Table*, Hazlitt changed the footnote somewhat. For example, the line "Had he been distributing stamps, or writing a sonnet" became "Had he been admiring a flower, or writing a sonnet?" The final sentence of the original foot-

²¹ P. 382. The article is unsigned. All of Hazlitt's anonymous writings cited in this study are included in P. P. Howe's edition. Cf. this line in "November, 1813": "Through perilous war, with regal fortitude. . . ."

²² P. 382. Cf. Howe, *Life*, p. 189.

²³ *The Examiner* (October 28, 1814), p. 577.

²⁴ *Books and Their Writers*, I, 169-70.

²⁵ See note 8 above. Actually little is known about Hazlitt's escapade at Keswick. Professor Griggs feels that Wordsworth and Coleridge "were not guilty of exaggeration." Hazlitt's biographers tend to dispute the evidence that makes him appear too immoral; Professor Chambers, on the other hand, believes that Hazlitt was guilty of "an indecent assault." See Earl Leslie Griggs, "Hazlitt's Estrangement from Coleridge and Wordsworth," *MLN*, XLVIII (1933), 173-76; Patmore, *op. cit.*, III, 141-42; Howe, *Life*, pp. 79-81; Pearson, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-40; Maclean, *op. cit.*, pp. 357-60; *Unpublished Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Earl Leslie Griggs (New Haven, 1933), II, 178-79, 196-97; and E. K. Chambers, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A Biographical Study* (Oxford, 1938), pp. 175-76, 295-96.

²⁶ P. 556.

note was left out: "We really have a very great contempt for anyone who differs with us on this subject."²⁷ Thus, the footnote in *The Round Table* was softened considerably, the reference to Wordsworth's political position as stamp collector being deleted entirely. This change, and others in *The Round Table* to be cited later, strongly indicate that Hazlitt was waging psychological warfare against his political opponent. We must remember that all of Hazlitt's attacks on Wordsworth in *The Examiner* were published anonymously. The general reading public, then, was probably not aware of Hazlitt's bitter attitude toward the poet, and Hazlitt, it seems, did not care whether his readers did know about the enmity. His attacks were purely personal; he wanted Wordsworth and his circle of friends (Robinson, Coleridge, Southey) to know about his feelings. Then, when *The Round Table* was issued under his own name by a responsible publishing company, Hazlitt could have toned down his articles (probably at his publisher's request) without compromising himself before his public. Wordsworth must undoubtedly have noticed the changes in the review of *The Excursion* and have been disturbed by them, in spite of the other alterations in his favor—alterations for public consumption. In this private war on Wordsworth, then, Hazlitt managed to attack his opponent in an extremely subtle manner.

Again in a footnote, to an essay on beauty (*The Examiner*, February 4, 1816), Hazlitt belabored Wordsworth, this time in reference to Edmund Burke. He writes that Burke did not live long enough to read Wordsworth's sonnet to the King and thus to see his former opponent change his political views. Hazlitt then accuses Wordsworth and his like of "literary prostitution." These authors, he charges, have come under the sway of the King, whose aim has been to "pervert those faculties which were intended to enlighten and reform the world, in order to plunge it into a darkness that may be felt; and a slavery, that can only cease by putting a stop to the propagation of the species."²⁸ In *The Round Table* this reference to Wordsworth and Burke in the footnote was also eliminated as part of Hazlitt's attempt to put the campaign against his opponent on a psychological basis.²⁹

Also on February 4, 1816, Wordsworth published three sonnets in *The Champion*, in praise of God for destroying the power of Napoleon at Waterloo.³⁰ Later in the year Wordsworth collected these sonnets and issued them with his "Thanksgiving Ode" and other political poems attacking Napoleon.³¹ Hazlitt probably read the sonnets in *The Champion*; if he did not, he certainly read an article in *The*

²⁷ I, 21.

²⁸ P. 78.

²⁹ Cf. *The Round Table*, II, 8-9.

³⁰ *The Champion* (February 4, 1816), p. 37.

³¹ *Thanksgiving Ode, January 18, 1816, with Other Short Pieces, chiefly Referring to Recent Events* (London, 1816).

Examiner (February 18, 1816) by Leigh Hunt,³² who quoted all three of the sonnets, the poet's brief hymns in praise of God's victory over Napoleon.³³ Hazlitt must also have read Wordsworth's odes and shorter poems in the slim volume of 1816. There can be no doubt that he was still more angered by the poet's strong (and courageous, in the face of powerful opposition) political position in 1816. Evidence of Hazlitt's state of mind can be found in his articles published in *The Examiner*.

On March 3, 1816, he struck at Wordsworth's sonnet "Occasioned by the Same Battle," which Hunt had quoted in full in his article of February 18. In the midst of a discussion on the pedantry of authors, Hazlitt refers to Wordsworth's poem:

Mr. Wordsworth has on a late occasion humorously applied this line of Spenser ["From all this world's encumbrance they did themselves assoil"] to persons holding sinecure places under government. He seems to intend adding to the list of such places that of the Poet-Laureate. This we think a decided improvement on the system.³⁴

One can, of course, easily observe Hazlitt's distaste of poets, among them Wordsworth, who had acquired government positions and patronage because of their political views—especially those hostile to Napoleon. It is important to note that this reference was also omitted when the essay was reprinted in *The Round Table*.³⁵

On June 9, 1816, in *The Examiner*, Hazlitt hit again at Wordsworth's government position, which seems to symbolize for him the poet's monarchism and his enmity toward Napoleon, the destroyer of monarchs:

They [the French] are vexed to see genius playing at Tom Fool, and honestly turned bawd. It gives them a cutting sensation to see Mr. Southey, poet laureat; Mr. Wordsworth, an exciseman; and Mr. Coleridge, nothing.³⁶

Hazlitt altered this passage in *The Round Table* to read, "It gives them a cutting sensation to see a number of things which, as they are unpleasant to see, we shall not here repeat."³⁷ Once again he skillfully erased criticism of Wordsworth at the same time that he altered his estimate of *The Excursion*.

Hazlitt continued the same kind of criticism in a footnote to "Speeches in Parliament on the Distress of the Country" (*The Examiner*, August 25, 1816). He strikes harshly:

Cannot Mr. Wordsworth contrive to trump up a sonnet or an ode to that pretty little pastoral, patriotic nick-nack, the Thumb-screw? O' my conscience, he

³² Edmund Blunden, *Leigh Hunt's "Examiner" Examined* (New York and London, n.d.), pp. 57-58.

³³ "Heaven Made a Party to Earthly Disputes—Mr. Wordsworth's Sonnets on Waterloo," pp. 97-98.

³⁴ *The Examiner*, p. 143. Cf. *Thanksgiving Ode*, p. 36.

³⁵ Cf. II, 32.

³⁶ P. 362.

³⁷ II, 77.

ought to write something on that subject, or he ought never to write another line but his stamp receipts. Let him stick to the excise and his promotion. The world have had enough of his *simplicity* in poetry and politics.³⁸

In an article "On Modern Apostates" (*The Examiner*, December 15, 1816), he scornfully ridiculed Wordsworth:

See, here comes one of them [modern apostates] to answer for himself. It is the same person who in the year 1800 was for hanging up the whole House of Commons . . . for being the echoes of the King's speeches for carrying on the war against the French Revolution. What is that *thing* he has in his hand? It is not a sonnet to the King celebrating his "royal fortitude," in having brought that war to a successful close fourteen years after. . . . Nor is it the same consistent person whose deep-toned voice re-bellows among the mountain echoes with peals of ideot [*sic*] rage and demon laughter. . . .³⁹

Thus, in December, 1816, perhaps the month during which Hazlitt was reworking his essays for *The Round Table*, he recalled Wordsworth's shift of opinion concerning the French Revolution and his sonnet "November, 1813."

Hazlitt's final attack on Wordsworth before the publication of *The Round Table* appeared in an article "On Modern Lawyers and Poets" (*The Examiner*, December 22, 1816). It is undoubtedly his severest and most unfair blow against the poet:

The spirit of Jacobin poetry is rank egotism. We know an instance. It is of a person who founded a school of poetry on sheer humanity, on idiot boys and mad mothers, and on Simon Lee, the old huntsman. The secret of the Jacobin poetry and the anti-jacobin politics of this writer is the same. His lyrical poetry was a cant of humanity about the commonest people to level the great with the small; and his political poetry is a cant of loyalty to level Bonaparte with kings and hereditary imbecility. As he would put up the commonest of men against kings and nobles, to satisfy his levelling notions, so for the same reason he would set up the meanest of kings against the greatest of men, reposing once more on the mediocrity of royalty. This person admires nothing that is admirable. . . . He tolerates nothing but what he himself creates. . . . He sees nothing but himself and the universe. He hates all greatness, and all pretension to it but his own. His egotism is in this respect a madness; for he scorns even the admiration of himself, thinking it a presumption in any one to suppose that he has taste or sense enough to understand him. He hates all science and all art . . . ; he hates prose, he hates all poetry but his own. . . . He is glad that Bonaparte is sent to St. Helena, and that the Louvre is dispersed for the same reason—to get rid of the idea of any thing greater, or thought greater than himself.⁴⁰

³⁸ P. 540. On May 5, 1816, Hazlitt had quoted lines from *The Excursion* and had claimed that Wordsworth did not understand the sentiment of "the instability of human greatness." See *The Examiner*, p. 286. On September 29, 1816, he lashed at the monarchism of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Doctor Stoddart, editor of the *Times*. See *ibid.*, p. 618.

³⁹ P. 785. Cf. Howe, *Life*, p. 71.

⁴⁰ P. 803. Cf. Howe, *Life*, pp. 214-16. Hazlitt reprinted the essence of this passage in *Lectures on the English Poets* (1818); it, however, was no longer a personal attack on Wordsworth, but on conservative poets in general. See Howe, ed., *Works*, V, 163-64. Hazlitt also reprinted part of "On Modern Lawyers and Poets" in *The Round Table* as "On Poetical Versatility." The criticism of Wordsworth was omitted, possibly because the entire purpose and nature of the original article was considerably altered. See *Round Table* II, 232-35. It is

This powerful, frenzied, utterly biased attack on Wordsworth shows us the angry frame of mind with which Hazlitt, late in 1816, prepared his 1814 review of *The Excursion* for *The Round Table*. Having criticized Wordsworth in print consistently from June 11, 1815, for political apostasy (which to Hazlitt consisted of Wordsworth's shift from admiration of the French Revolution to devotion to King George III, his acceptance of political position, and, above all, his deep hostility toward Napoleon), he could not have allowed any lavish praise to remain in the review when it was republished.

Thus Hazlitt's polite political criticism of Wordsworth's attitude toward the Revolution grew into severe, unrelenting blows against the poet. Wordsworth's sonnet "November, 1813," in praise of King George for the victory over Napoleon at Leipzig, seems to have touched off the real explosion. From June 11, 1815, to December 22, 1816, Hazlitt made at least ten references in print to Wordsworth's politics, all centering on three things: the poet's monarchism, his acceptance of political patronage, and his writings against Napoleon. The tone of Hazlitt's criticism grew more scornful and more powerful as time passed. The entire controversy culminated in the severe lashing by Hazlitt on December 22, 1816. In the essay "On Modern Lawyers and Poets," he emphasized Wordsworth's hostility toward Napoleon, which resulted from the poet's own egotism. Greatly disgusted by what he felt was the political apostasy of Wordsworth and his fellow Lake poets, and goaded into mounting anger by their criticisms of Napoleon, Hazlitt approached the task of editing his essays for republication in *The Round Table*. He worked over his review of Wordsworth's *The Excursion*; and for political reasons, or political prejudices, he eliminated almost all the lofty praise which he had written about the poem and its author. At the same time, he cut out or tempered (perhaps at the behest of the publisher) his attacks on Wordsworth in other essays reprinted in *The Round Table*. Wordsworth, however, profited little by these revisions because he could easily read Hazlitt's personal political malice in the altered review of *The Excursion*. The changes in *The Round Table* thus clearly indicate that Hazlitt was indulging in a psychological contest with his hated opponent.

The reviewer of 1814 was Hazlitt, the aspiring critic, eager to please and not too anxious to destroy. The author and editor of *The*

interesting to note that Hazlitt mingles his political criticism of Wordsworth with the poet's feeling (according to Hazlitt) that he was too great for criticism. In "Parallel Passages" (*The Examiner*, December 24, 1815, p. 827), Hazlitt had stated that his review of *The Excursion* had been a "thankless office" which "did not succeed." Crabb Robinson records expressions by Hazlitt that Wordsworth had to have eulogy or nothing else (*Books and Their Writers*, I, 166, 179, 213). The blending of Bonapartist criticism of Wordsworth with charges against his intense egotism adds to the extreme personal attack which Hazlitt was waging.

Round Table was Hazlitt, the devoted Bonapartist, ever ready to crush those who dared to criticize the man who had once conquered most of Europe. He thus committed a cardinal sin of literary criticism—a sin very prevalent in his day of political literary criticism: he mixed irrevocably his political prejudices with his judgments of a poet's work.

Wayne University

HERMAN MELVILLE AS OFFICE-SEEKER

By HARRISON HAYFORD and MERRELL DAVIS*

The problem of vocation was never settled for Herman Melville in his youth. As a boy, he clerked in an Albany bank and in his brother Gansevoort's fur store, and by the end of his teens he had found no better solution than schoolteaching. By the time he was twenty, however, he had prepared himself at Lansingburgh Academy "in the business of surveying and engineering"; and in April, 1839, he made his first attempt at a government job, by seeking a position in the engineering department of the state canal system through the influence of his Uncle Peter Gansevoort.¹ For some reason the attempt failed, and in June of the same year he turned sailor and shipped on his first voyage, to Liverpool.² Upon his return he resumed schoolteaching, but even that failed him when his school was closed for lack of funds. After a trip West in 1840, during which he visited his Uncle Thomas Melvill in Illinois but found no promise there of a career, he turned sailor again, this time shipping for the Pacific on a whaler.³ The next four years he engaged in a variety of occupations, as sailor, harpooner, "beachcomber," store-clerk, and seaman in the United States Navy. None of these gave him a permanent means of livelihood, but his experiences in the South Seas supplied him with the materials which upon his return in 1844 led him into writing as a career.

Although Melville had shown early literary inclinations, it was less by choice than by the drift of circumstances that he took up writing as a means of earning his living. Early in 1847, even while *Typee* was making him famous and paying him his first substantial earnings, and *Omoo* was about to be published, he made another attempt to secure a government appointment. He was planning to be married, and he needed a steady income. Excellent connections of the Melville and

* The authors of the present study acknowledge the friendly coöperation of Jay Leyda who discovered and generously shared with them some of its important materials.

¹ Peter Gansevoort to William C. Bouck, Canal Commissioner, Albany, April 4, 1839. A draft of this unpublished letter is in the Gansevoort-Lansing Collection of the New York Public Library (hereafter abbreviated G-L, NYPL).

² William H. Gilman, "Melville's Liverpool Trip," *MLN*, LXI (1946), 543-47. Mr. Gilman has completed a thorough study of Melville's early years (Yale dissertation) and has assisted in this article.

³ Maria Melville to Peter Gansevoort, Lansingburgh, May 16, 1840. G-L, NYPL. This letter and others in the Gansevoort-Lansing Collection furnish fresh details of Melville's early life. A sentence in a copy of the manuscript of Melville's sketch of his Uncle Thomas Melvill, omitted in the published version in J. E. A. Smith's *History of Pittsfield* (Springfield, Mass., 1876), pp. 399-400, refers to his Western visit: "In 1841 [1840], I visited my now venerable kinsman in his western home. . . ." G-L, NYPL. See also Melville's poem, "Trophies of Peace: Illinois in 1840," in Constable edition of Melville's *Works*, XVI, 313. Uncle Thomas, as well as other relatives of Melville, continued to spell the name without the final *e*.

Gansevoort families with the Democratic party, then in power, made him hope to get it from the government.

One reason for hope was the service of his late brother Gansevoort Melville to the Party. Failing in business, Gansevoort had studied law in New York, had engaged in politics during Herman's absence, and as a Tammany orator had stumped the country in 1844. State and national leaders of the Party spoke of him as one of their brilliant young men. A month after Herman's return the Democrats triumphed and rewarded Gansevoort by appointing him Secretary of Legation in London, under Ambassador Louis McLane. Scarcely a year later, however, in the midst of the London excitement over *Typee*, his career was cut short by sudden death. There was not enough money among his effects in London or in his family at home to pay the medical and burial expenses.⁴ Indeed, he left large debts. Herman Melville's letters on this occasion to President Polk and James Buchanan, Secretary of State, as well as to William L. Marcy, Secretary of War, display not only his indigence, but also his consciousness of the debt the Democratic party owed to his family and to Gansevoort. His letter to Buchanan is much like the other two:

Sir—You have ere this, I presume received a letter from the Hon Louis McLane referring to certain urgent pecuniary claims upon government connected with the sudden decease of my brother Mr Gansevoort Melville late Secretary of Legation in London.—In a most friendly letter to the family of the deceased Mr McLane refers to having written such a communication. I earnestly hope, Sir, that this is not only so, but that you have favorably considered the subject to which Mr McLane alludes.—

Permit me Sir, here to submit to you an extract from a letter, addressed by me this day to the President.

"Our family are in exceedingly embarrassed circumstances, and unless the measure which Mr McLane recommends is carried out, a great part of the expenses attendant on my brother's last illness and funeral will have (for some time at least) to remain unpaid.—The claims of a widowed mother, four sisters, and a younger brother, are paramount even to the duties we owe the dead.—I should feel most bitterly the reproach, to which the country in some measure, and the memory of my poor brother would be subjected, should these debts remain long uncanceled. But I can not think that this will be the case. The services which so many of my family in many ways have rendered the country—my noble brother's own short but brilliant public career, and the universally-acknowledged & signal services he rendered the Democratic party in the last memorable general election—all these, Sir, will surely lend great weight to the urgent claims of the case itself."

I hardly think Sir, that I need say one word more. I rely upon the justice of

⁴ The Lemuel Shaw papers of the Massachusetts Historical Society (hereafter abbreviated MHS) contain letters by and about Gansevoort Melville, as does G-L, NYPL. The appointment papers of the Department of State in the National Archives (hereafter abbreviated NA) include thirty letters dated in April, 1845, from prominent Democrats, recommending Gansevoort Melville for appointment as Marshal for the Southern District of New York, and speaking in highest terms of his services to the party. Also in the Department of State papers, Diplomatic Dispatches, Great Britain, Volume 56, are dispatches concerning his illness and death.

government, and upon Mr Buchanan's giving his favorable consideration to a subject, so peculiarly deserving of it.⁵

Buchanan immediately replied that he had already authorized McLane to charge \$250 to the expenses of the Legation for Gansevoort's funeral expenses; and thus, it seemed, the Party assured Melville that it was mindful of its obligations.

Melville also hoped to be favored by the Party through his Uncle Peter's influence in New York Democratic circles. A prominent Albany lawyer, Peter Gansevoort was associated with the Democratic clique known as the "Albany Regency" which dominated the state. He had been appointed "first judge" of the Albany County Court by Governor William C. Bouck, and his influence was continually solicited by applicants for state and federal offices.⁶

When Melville resolved early in 1847 to seek a government appointment, he turned to his Uncle Peter for a letter to Peter's friend and townsman, Senator John A. Dix. On February 3, he wrote that the passage of the new Loan Bill had created a number of offices in the Treasury Department and that he had resolved to go to Washington at once "with a view of making an application for one—or, if I do not succeed in this specific object, to express such claims as I have upon some other point." Already he had obtained "several strong letters from various prominent persons" in New York "to the most influential men" in Washington.⁷ His uncle wrote to Dix, introducing Melville as the author of *Typee* and asking the Senator to help him "in the furtherance of his wishes." He also assured his nephew of assistance and coached him:

When you are introduced to Mrs Dix, please present my respects to her & as she is an excellent sensible & charming woman you must make yourself very agreeable to her, which will greatly aid you in carrying out your views, at Washington—Be particular at your first interview with Gen^l Dix, not to say a word about your business—He will invite you to his House—and at a proper time, you can explain yourself fully. . . . When you call on Gen^l Marcy, present my respects to him.

⁵ Lansingburgh, June 6, 1846. NA. Quoted passages from letters are transcribed without the use of *sic* here and throughout this article. Melville's letter to Polk has not been found. His letter to Marcy is in the Doheny Library, Camarillo, California. On June 5, 1848, Edwin L. Croswell, editor of the Democratic Albany *Argus* wrote a three-page letter to President Polk advocating allowance of a quarter's advance salary to Gansevoort's estate, and advising him that Herman Melville, "a young gentleman of talent and genius, the author of 'Typee,' " would write him on the subject. NA. Buchanan's reply to Melville, Washington, June 7, 1846, is also in NA (copy).

⁶ See numerous letters in G-L, NYPL.

⁷ Victor Hugo Paltsits, ed., *Family Correspondence of Herman Melville* (New York, 1929), p. 11. Also in G-L, NYPL, is the draft of Peter Gansevoort's letter to John A. Dix, Albany, February 6, 1847, with a draft of his letter to Melville on the back, undated. The "Loan Bill" to which Melville referred was an act of January 28, 1847, which authorized the issuance by the President of Treasury notes to the amount of \$23,000,000, at six per cent, "for such sum or sums as the exigencies of government" might require (A. T. Huntington and Robert J. Mawhinney, ed., *Laws of the United States concerning Money, Banking, and Loans, 1778-1909* [Washington, 1910], pp. 143-47).

Further documents are unavailable, but it is easy to see why Melville's "strong letters" carried insufficient weight to knock down even a small political plum for him. Only two new Treasury clerkships were created, and these were given to deserving Democrats on the spot. Government jobs were the hard coin of political recompense or retainer, and since he had neither performed nor promised service, he had no actual claim to a job. Realistic bookkeeping had marked his brother's account as closed; indeed, unknown to Melville, Gansevoort's department in London had brought him into disfavor with his superiors.⁸ Though Dix and probably Marcy felt well disposed toward Melville as a nephew of Peter Gansevoort, he had blundered into a political mare's nest. Dix belonged to the "Barnburner" or radical faction of New York Democrats, while Marcy leaned toward the conservative "Hunkers." Dix and the Barnburners were just then bitterly accusing Marcy and the Hunkers of knifing their leader, Governor Silas Wright, in the recent state election. Dix and Marcy, therefore, could not work together for Melville.⁹ Nor could Dix work with the other New York senator, Daniel S. Dickinson, a Hunker who was engaged against him daily in so constant a wrangle over every appointment that President Polk soon threw up his hands in disgust. The Secretary of the Treasury, R. J. Walker, belonged to the Southern wing of the party, which had blocked the nomination of the Barnburner chief, Van Buren, in 1844, and he too was being blamed for Silas Wright's defeat. Dix could therefore ask no favors of him, and in any case the Treasury Department patronage belonged to the South and West. As for President Polk, he "loathed an office-seeker," and was filling his diary with daily diatribes against the hordes who besieged his office. "Neither fire nor ice, I believe would stop them," he wrote. "How much better it would be for them if they were at their respective homes pursuing some honest business for a livelihood than to be hanging on at Washington as mere place seekers, in order that they might be supported at the public expense." If Melville called upon the President, he may have been lost among the hundreds of "loafers without merit" to whom Polk showed a "stern and resolute" countenance and "gave no encouragement."¹⁰ At any rate, he soon

⁸ The disfavor is reflected in the correspondence, both official and private, of Buchanan and McLane (NA), and in President Polk's diary (see n.10 for Polk *Diary*).

⁹ It would be enlightening to know just what part Marcy played in Melville's failure to secure a job, for Melville satirized him in the "Old Zach" articles he wrote for *Yankee Doodle* after his return from Washington. In 1853, as Secretary of State, Marcy was again pressed to give Melville an appointment and did not do so. NA.

¹⁰ See Herbert D. A. Donovan, *The Barnburners* (New York, 1925), pp. 74 ff.; Morgan Dix, *Memoirs of John Adams Dix* (New York, 1883), I, 227 ff.; Eugene McCormac, *James K. Polk* (Berkeley, 1922), pp. 338 ff.; Milo Milton Quaife, ed., *Diary of James K. Polk* (Chicago, 1910), II, 360 ff., 382 ff., 399, 417, 427, 492.

gave up hanging on at Washington and went home to pursue the business of writing for his livelihood.

Assured by the success of *Omoo* that he could hold a literary audience and get paid for it, he married Elizabeth Shaw, daughter of Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw of Massachusetts, and set to work to support his household, which often included his mother and four sisters. By April, 1851, writing long hours at high speed, he had turned out three more books and had a fourth in press, the books being written, as he told R. H. Dana, Jr., "almost entirely for 'lucre'—by the job, as a woodsawyer saws wood."¹¹ In five years, the "jobs" had brought in "lucre" amounting to at least \$8,069.34, or a yearly average of \$1,600. Two facts, however, had emerged to confront him. The earnings, though larger than those of most writers of the time, were not large enough, for he had overdrawn his account with his publishers by nearly \$700 and was refused any further advances. One way to catch up was to live more cheaply, and he had attempted that by moving his household to a farm in Pittsfield, for whose purchase he now owed his father-in-law (at least on paper) \$5,000.¹² The only real way was to saw faster more and more of the wood his public would buy. The other fact confronting him demanded that he take a contrary way: increasingly strong impulses bade him to take his work seriously, to write for "truth" not for money, to create great literature rather than saw wood. He knew he could not afford the time for that. Following the impulse, however, he had withheld and worked over the manuscript of *Moby-Dick* for many months after its first version was nearly done (as indeed he had previously held back *Mardi*, the book in which the impulse had first manifested itself).¹³ Then he wrote to Hawthorne, "a little bluey," he must finish it up somehow: "Dollars damn me; and the malicious Devil is forever grinning in upon me, holding the door ajar. . . . What I feel most moved to write, that is

¹¹ Harrison Hayford, "Two New Letters of Herman Melville," *ELH*, *A Journal of English Literary History*, XI (1944), 77.

¹² William Charvat, "Melville's Income," *American Literature*, XV (1943), 254.

¹³ See Merrell R. Davis, "Herman Melville's *Mardi*: The Biography of a Book," Yale dissertation (1947), and Hayford, "Two New Letters," pp. 81-83. An unpublished letter from Melville to Lemuel Shaw, New York, October 6, 1849, written the same day as the first of these "new letters" to Dana, contains an illuminating passage on his attitude toward these books: "For Redburn I anticipate no particular reception of any kind. It may be deemed a book of tolerable entertainment:—& may be accounted dull.—As for the other book [*White Jacket*], it will be sure to be attacked in some quarters. But no reputation that is gratifying to me, can possibly be achieved by either of these books. They are two *jobs*, which I have done for money—being forced to it as other men are to sawing wood. And while I have felt obliged to refrain from writing the kind of books I would wish to; yet in writing these two books, I have not repressed myself much—so far as *they* are concerned; but have spoken pretty much as I feel.—Being books, then, written in this way, my only desire for their 'success' (as it is called) springs from my pocket, & not from my heart. So far as I am individually concerned, & independent of my pocket, it is my earnest desire to write those sort of books which are said to 'fail.'" MHS.

banned,—it will not pay. Yet, altogether, write the *other way*, I cannot. So the product is a final hash, and all my books are botches."¹⁴ Two "botched" books in succession, *Moby-Dick* (1851) and *Pierre* (1852), reflected the unresolved tension of these conflicting imperatives and set a pattern of behavior, leading to physical and mental exhaustion, from which he found it difficult to extricate himself. After the Democratic victory in the national election of November, 1852, a consular appointment seemed to offer the way out.

II

At that time he was further in debt than ever, and the harsh reviews and poor sales of *Pierre* were disproving his prediction that it was "very much more calculated for popularity" than any of his works since *Omoo*.¹⁵ When Melville visited Hawthorne at Concord late in the year, Franklin Pierce, the president-elect, had recently promised Hawthorne a consulship.¹⁶ Possibly this suggested the idea to Melville, and during the visit they may have discussed his chances at the same time they discussed the "Agatha" story which he had picked up at Nantucket and was urging Hawthorne to write. Whatever its source, the idea was eagerly discussed in his own household. But it was in "Agatha" or some other new work, possibly *Israel Potter*, that he engrossed himself during the winter, rather than in measures to secure an appointment by which to escape literature. And again, as during the winter before, he worked so hard that his family "all felt anxious about the strain on his health in the spring of 1853."¹⁷ Their effort to salvage his health, rather than any resolution of his own to drop literature, motivated the consular application. For though he was willing, even eager, for an appointment, there is no indication that he stirred hand or foot to secure it.

When the new administration took office in March, 1853, apparently Melville did go so far as to ask Hawthorne to say a word for him in Washington. Hawthorne probably gave him the same hard-headed advice he wrote to Richard H. Stoddard on March 16, when the young poet sought his help for a Customs House appointment: he should pile up as much of a snowball as he could in the way of political interest, as there was never so fierce a time before among office-seekers,

¹⁴ Julian Hawthorne, *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife* (Boston, 1885), I, 402.

¹⁵ See Melville's letter to Richard Bentley, April 16, 1852; Harrison Hayford, "The Significance of Melville's 'Agatha' Letters," *ELH, A Journal of English Literary History*, XIII (1946), 306.

¹⁶ Lawrence S. Hall, *Hawthorne, Critic of Society* (New Haven, 1944), pp. 49-50.

¹⁷ See (below) his mother's letter of April 20, 1853; his wife's later biographical notes, in Raymond Weaver's edition of *Journal up the Straits* (New York, 1935), p. xv; and Sarah Morewood's letter to George Duyckinck, December 28, 1851, in Luther Mansfield, "Glimpses of Herman Melville's Life in Pittsfield, 1850-1851," *American Literature*, IX (1937), 48.

and it would be well for him to go to Washington to prosecute his application in person. "Are you fond of brandy?" he asked Stoddard, half humorously. "Your strength of head (which you tell me you possess) may stand you in good stead in Washington; for most of these public men are inveterate guzzlers, and love a man that can stand up to them in that particular. It would never do to let them see you corned, however."¹⁸ His warning recalls Poe's disastrous trip to Washington just ten years before, when letting the politicians see him "corned" cost him an appointment in the Philadelphia Custom House that he had hoped would relieve him of the necessity of "coining his brain into silver at the nod of a master."¹⁹

Hawthorne's appointment as consul at Liverpool was confirmed by the Senate on March 26, and on April 14 he set out for the capital to urge his own claim upon the consulate at Manchester and Melville's claim upon Honolulu. For some reason Melville did not go with him.²⁰ Hawthorne conferred with Allan Melville in New York and impressed upon him the importance of securing as many letters of support as he could from influential Democratic politicians. Allan wrote immediately to his mother, who lived much of the time with Herman and knew the condition of his health; and she sent an urgent letter to Peter Gansevoort:

My Dear Brother—The request contained in the letter you handed me in the stage today, was this, That you would have the goodness to procure for my son *Herman*, strong letters from Albany—from Mr. Marcy, or any member of the Cabinet, & from yourself, for a Consulship.

A letter from the Governor & Mr. Hunt, & Judge Parker. I am requested to ask of you general letters referring to no particular class of office, except a foreign position.

There will be no necessity of any further explanation of the cause of his friends wishing to obtain such a position for him except to get him away from writing for a time, & a change of labor.

If you will do me the personal favor to procure those letters, *immediately*, & enclose them to Allan at New York 14 Wall Street. He will send them on, enclosed to Mr Hawthorne, who is now at Washington and called upon Allan while in New York on his way to Washington. Mr. Hawthorne is the personal friend of President Peirce, & the Consul for Liverpool. He has promised to receive those letters, & speak to the President. He will be-friend Herman all in his power, and he has a good deal of influence.

A change of occupation my dear brother in my opinion is necessary for Herman, after General Pierce's election he was very anxious to receive the office of some foreign Consulship. We talked the matter over again & again, arranged

¹⁸ Richard Henry Stoddard, *Recollections Personal and Literary* (New York, 1903), pp. 116 ff.

¹⁹ Arthur Hobson Quinn, *Edgar Allan Poe* (New York, 1914), pp. 322 ff., 340, 360-62, 377-78.

²⁰ On May 24 Lemuel Shaw wrote to his son Lemuel, Jr., "We received a letter last evening from Herman, informing us, that Elizabeth gave birth to a daughter and is very well, that is, very well, compared with her situation on the last similar occasion." MHS. The imminence of this birth, with possible complications, may have made Melville unwilling to leave home.

that the girls & myself, & the children should stay at Arrowhead & Lizzie accompany Herman.

But Herman dislikes asking favors from any one, he therefore postponed writing from time to time, until he became so completely absorbed by this new work, now nearly ready for the press, that he has not taken the proper & necessary measures to procure this earnestly wished for office.

In my opinion, I must again repeat it Herman would be greatly benefited by a sojourn abroad, he would then be compelled to more intercourse with his fellow creatures. It would very materially renew, & strengthen both his body & mind.

The constant in-door confinement with little intermission to which Hermans occupation as author compels him, does not agree with him. This constant working of the brain, & excitement of the imagination, is wearing Herman out, & you will my dear Peter be doing him a lasting benefit if by your added exertions you can procure for him a foreign Consulship. . . .²¹

For years Peter had been receiving similar frantic appeals from her, but he acted promptly. The next evening he reported a full day's work to Allan. "I take a very deep interest, I assure you Allan, in the application for a Consulship for Herman," he wrote. "I have for some time been of the opinion that his severe labours, would eventuate to his misery & most anxiously wish that he may for a time be relieved from the constant confinement which the occupation of author imposes upon him. Last evening I rec^d a letter from your mother who is now at Lansingburgh on the subject & have since been engaged in efforts to obtain letters in his behalf from proper sources."²² The fruits of his efforts were letters to the President from Amasa J. Parker, a justice of the state supreme court, and G. L. Lansing, chancellor of the University, as well as a letter to Caleb Cushing, the new attorney-general, from Edwin L. Croswell, editor of the Albany *Argus*, which was the chief organ of the Albany Regency.²³ These men, in Peter Gansevoort's judgment, were "the only persons here whose opinion, & wishes could most aid us in the application." He enclosed the letters from Lansing and Parker with his note to Allan, and promised to write one of his own to Washington. "I think these letters, with the kind influence of Mr. Hawthorne with the President will be sufficient," he said, but added, with an eye to Lemuel Shaw's influence, "Allow me to suggest the propriety of obtaining a letter from Boston."

Both Parker and Lansing praised Melville to Pierce, and both echoed what Peter Gansevoort had told them of the necessity for

²¹ "Lansingburgh, Tuesday Eve^s 20th April [1853] 10 O'clock P.M." G-L, NYPL.

²² Draft of letter, Albany, April 21, 1853, 8. P.M. G-L, NYPL.

²³ Peter Gansevoort wrote to Croswell, April 22, 1853 (draft in G-L) asking him to write to Pierce for Melville, whom he described as "well known to you as the author of 'Typee'"; he mentioned the facts relayed to him by Maria as to the state of Melville's health, his completing a new work, and Hawthorne's help in Washington; and he ended "Herman has always been a firm Democrat." Croswell, who belonged to an anti-Marcy faction of the New York party, wrote a strong recommendation to Caleb Cushing, New York, April 29, 1853 (Cushing papers, Library of Congress). Croswell's brother Sherman Croswell also wrote to the President, April 26, 1853.

relieving his literary labors to spare his health.²⁴ Judge Parker cited Hawthorne's appointment as a gratifying indication of the President's desire to promote the literary reputation of the country, and suggested the propriety of awarding Melville a consulship in accordance with this policy. "Mr. Melville," he wrote, with unintentional understatement, "has contributed to our Literature much that is instructive and delightful and gives ample promise, with proper encouragement, of a most brilliant career as a writer." Among Melville's political claims to recognition, however, neither Parker nor Lansing could find anything more pertinent than his distinguished and Democratic ancestry. On this point Parker wrote, "Mr. Melville is a democrat. Descended on the side of his mother, from Gen Gansevoort, distinguished in the history of the country, and on the side of his father from one of the most gallant actors at Boston in the early scenes of the Revolution, he could not be otherwise than a true and faithful supporter of democratic principles." Then he added, "Mr. Melville, as you are probably aware, is the son-in-law of Ch[ief] J[ustice] Shaw of Massachusetts."

These letters from Albany, along with two others he had procured meanwhile in New York, Allan mailed with a note to Hawthorne:

I have but a few moments before the closing of the mail in which to enclose to you letters to the President from *Charles O'Connor*, now United States District Attorney (a very strong one)—*Amasa J. Parker* one of the Judges of the Supreme Court of this State. *G. L. Lansing* Chancellor of our university and one from *Edward C. West*.

In the struggle for *Honolulu* if my brother is fairly placed before the President, his chances cannot but be good—I beg of you a perusal of the enclosed letters, especially that of Mr O'Connor whose name must have great weight with the President.

I beg of you Mr Hawthorne to do what you can and what I know you are willing to do to aid in the selection of my brother for the Consulate at Honolulu—

Should it in your opinion be *impossible* to secure to him this post, I would mention *Antwerp* as a consulate of which I have certain information. I suppose my brother would prefer a post in Great Britain. But I can learn nothing definite of consulships there which are to be filled by new men.

I have taken no measures to procure letters from Massachusetts supposing that it would be unnecessary, as you yourself could speak for the Commonwealth. But today I have written to Judge Shaw on the subject, I hope to expect something from Boston in a few days. . . . I understand from Genl Dix that it was supposed no more consulships would be filled from New York. He considered my brother's residence in Mass. as favorable.²⁵

Allan valued Charles O'Connor's letter because he knew that a letter's contents weighed less than the writer's signature. O'Connor

²⁴ Lansing to Pierce, Albany, April 21, 1853; Parker to Pierce, Albany, April 20, 1853. NA.

²⁵ New York, April 22, 1853. NA. Allan Melville acknowledged his Uncle Peter's letter on April 23, informing him that the letters he sent had been dispatched to Washington the same day. "I had anticipated your suggestion as to Boston, having already written to Judge Shaw," he wrote. "If letters from Gov. Seymour & Mr. Corning could be obtained they would be useful." G-L, NYPL. No letters from Seymour or Corning, both strong Marcy supporters, have been found.

wrote grandly, "Mr. Melville has added lustre to the American name by his numerous and popular literary productions. He has contributed to the advancement of our fame as a nation throughout the civilized world and by efforts of genius commanding general admiration has formed a bond of union and amity between our great republic and the isles of the Pacific." This rhetoric signified little more than that he was willing to endorse Melville for the consulate at Honolulu, but since he was the most prominent lawyer of the New York bar, and a leader of the "Hard" Democrats, the letter was valuable.²⁶ E. C. West's letter added nothing new but recommended Melville generally for "some suitable position abroad" and explained what Allan had told him, that "his labors have been so severe of late years as to make it a point of great importance and earnest desire with his friends to secure for him some relief from his toils."²⁷

Acting on the tip from J. A. Dix, Allan sent off an appeal on the same day, April 22, to Chief Justice Shaw.²⁸ Twelve days later, on May 4, Hawthorne was back in New York with reports which Allan relayed the same day to Peter Gansevoort, shifting the siege from Honolulu to Antwerp and asking for increased pressure on Marcy, the Secretary of State:

Mr. Hawthorne returned from Washington this morning. He informs me that Mr. Cushing is warmly in favor of Herman's appointment to a Consulship. The President makes no promises, but will as I infer from what Mr. Hawthorne told me favor Herman when the matter comes up in Cabinet Council—

As the appointment of Consulships, belongs particularly to Mr. Marcy's department it is important to produce some impression on him favorable to Herman. If he is influenced by past transactions Gansevoort's friendship for him & the assistance he gave towards securing his appointment in Mr. Polk's cabinet ought to be remembered at this time.

I am informed that Mr. Corning has influence with the Secretary of State. He is acquainted with the family and from his known qualities of heart I should suppose a letter could be got from him to Mr. Marcy, Herman being in every way qualified.

A few days Mr. Hawthorne tells me will determine the fate of all applicants for Consulships.

Knowing you to be well acquainted with Mr. Corning I cannot from the great interest I take in the successful issue of Herman's application well avoid asking your aid in procuring a letter from him to Mr. Marcy and such an one as will be likely to have an effect.

It will be well to have Herman mentioned as a resident of Mass: New York has already rec^d her share of these appointments.

²⁶ O'Connor to Pierce, New York, April 21, 1853. NA. O'Connor was appointed United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, although, according to Maunsell B. Field, Pierce had at first resolved to make O'Connor his attorney-general (*Memories of Many Men and Some Women* [New York, 1874], p. 160). See Roy Franklin Nichols, *The Democratic Machine, 1850-1854* (New York, 1923), pp. 67, 208, 211.

²⁷ E. C. West was a lawyer, with an office on Wall Street near Allan Melville's. NA.

²⁸ Allan Melville's letters to Lemuel Shaw are not preserved among Shaw's papers. MHS.

Honolulu is out of the question. *Antwerp* is the post Herman is now urged for—

I may add that it may be in your power to interest Gov. Seymour. . . .²⁹

Peter Gansevoort secured no further letters to Marcy; but on the day of Hawthorne's return Allan Melville enlisted three conspicuous Democrats. John Van Buren, brilliant son of the former president, was an enormously popular orator of the Free-Soil faction, but he was distrusted by Marcy and the conservatives. Perhaps for this reason, he addressed his recommendation to Pierce rather than to Marcy:

Mr. Herman Melville is a candidate for the place of consul at Antwerp, & altho' I have not the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with him, I know his family connections so well that I naturally feel interested in his success—Mr. M's literary reputation is so well known that it is unnecessary to do more than to remind you of his high position in this respect, & politically and personally it gives me pleasure to say that the extensive family to which Mr. M. belongs are & have been from time out of mind almost without exception, honest men, sound Democrats & patriotic citizens.³⁰

John Cochrane, a Barnburner just appointed surveyor of the port of New York, cordially recommended Melville to Marcy for the Antwerp post, asserting, "there can be no doubt that his appointment would be creditable to the government, as it is merited by the high literary and personal character of Mr. Melville."³¹ And Azariah C. Flagg, an elder statesman of the Albany Regency, a Barnburner, appealed to Marcy's memory of Herman Melville "as an Albany boy." "His brother," he wrote, "as you will recollect was an active republican and in his life time acted a conspicuous part in politics with the young men of this city; all his connections in Albany, as far as I know, are republicans of the highest standing."³² These letters swelled Melville's file in Washington.

Because Chief Justice Shaw was rushing to clear his court calendar preparatory to a trip to Europe, he delayed for more than a week. Then, besides his own letter, he contributed only three recommendations, none of which bolstered Melville's cause very much. All three recommended him for Honolulu, which Shaw had not been told was already "out of the question." That of Richard H. Dana, Jr., spoke warmly of Melville's qualifications for the post, but at Shaw's sugges-

²⁹ New York, May 4, 1853. G-L, NYPL.

³⁰ Van Buren to Pierce, New York, May 4, 1853. NA. See the account of John Van Buren in Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Jackson* (Boston, 1945), *passim*. Most of the New York Democrats who endorsed Melville figure prominently in this book. See also Nichols, *The Democratic Machine*, p. 93 and *passim*, and Allan Nevins, *Ordeal of the Union* (New York and London, 1947), II, 69 ff.

³¹ Cochrane to Marcy, New York, May 4, 1853. NA. See Nichols, *The Democratic Machine*, pp. 202-03.

³² Flagg to Marcy, New York, May 5, 1853. NA. See Nichols, *The Democratic Machine*, p. 92 and *passim*; Donovan, *The Barnburners*, *passim*; also Schlesinger, *Age of Jackson*, *passim*.

tion it was addressed to Allan Melville, for whatever use he could make of it, because Dana was a Free-Soil Whig and had no influence with the Administration.³³ That of H. W. Bishop, unsuccessful Democratic candidate for Congress from the Berkshire district, was addressed to Marcy, but it was not written until May 24 and came too late to affect the decision upon Honolulu.³⁴ Samuel D. Bradford also wrote to Secretary Marcy, on May 24.³⁵ Lemuel Shaw's eminent position was more a bar than a boon in practical politics because it was impossible for the Chief Justice to canvass for political favors. Still, he advocated his son-in-law's cause as strongly as propriety allowed, in a letter of May 3 to Caleb Cushing, who had just given up his place beside him on the supreme bench of Massachusetts to become attorney-general. He had already sought Cushing's influence in keeping his own son on the government payroll.

I have another favor to ask you in the way of patronage; I would do it however first premising that in all such cases, I do not wish you to act in any case contrary to your own judgment, or contrary to any course of policy, which you may adopt. In the confidence that you will do so, I feel at liberty to make known to you my wishes.

I learn that my son in law, Mr Herman Melville, now of Pittsfield in this state, is a candidate for the consulship of Honolulu, Sandwich Islands. He is the son of Allan Melville now deceased formerly of New York & Albany, and grandson of Maj. Thomas Melville of Boston, of revolutionary memory & long in the Boston Custom House. Herman Melville is the brother of Gansevoort Melville, who was secretary of legation under Prest. Polk, in England & died there, grandson of Gen. Gansevoort of Albany. The family are well known to Mr. Sec. Marcy, & I rather think the Boston family are well known to the President, through their intimacy with that of Col Means of Amherst N.H. Mr. Herman Melville is probably known to you through his literary productions, some of which were very popular, especially those which related scenes & incidents in the Pacific. He resided some time in the Sandwich Islands, I think he would be quite competent to the duties of such an office, & would be especially useful at that great resort for American Whalers.

Mr. Hawthorne, is his friend & knows him well, & as I understand has taken measures to commend him to the administration. It would be a severe trial to me, to have my daughter go to such a distance with her young and growing family, but it is sacrifice I would cheerfully submit to, to promote their welfare.³⁶

³³ See Raymond Weaver, *Herman Melville* (New York, 1921), pp. 344-45, for Dana's letter to Allan Melville, May 10, 1853. A first draft of the letter is in MHS among Dana's first drafts. There is also a draft of the note included with this letter to Allan: "The enclosed is at the service of my friend, in any way he or his friends think best. I write it in this form at the suggestion of the Ch. Jus."

³⁴ Bishop to Marcy, Boston, May 24, 1853. NA. Bishop to Shaw, May 24, 1853, in the Melville collection of the Harvard College Library (hereafter abbreviated M, HCL).

³⁵ Bradford to Shaw, West Roxbury, May 25, 1853: "I prepared the letter to Gov^r Marcy in favour of Mr Melville last evening, and sent it off this morning. I made it as strong as I could; and hope it will be in time, before the appointment has been made." MHS. Bradford was a wealthy importer.

³⁶ Shaw to Cushing, Boston, May 3, 1853 (Cushing papers, Library of Congress). The son, John Oakes Shaw, held a clerkship in the Boston Custom House, given him in 1848 by Marcus Morton, Collector, the most powerful Democratic politician in Massachusetts, who was friendly with Shaw, though Shaw was a Webster Whig.

As "president-maker" in the dark-horse nomination of Pierce, Attorney-General Cushing was closer than any other adviser to the President's ear and had more to say about the spoils.³⁷ Even without Shaw's letter he had been sufficiently impressed by the New York and Albany letters and by Hawthorne's advocacy, to write to Phineas Allen, publisher of the Pittsfield *Sun*, asking about Melville's politics. Assured that as far as Allen knew, "Mr. Herman Melvill has not taken any part in politics since his residence in Pittsfield . . . attended the polls . . . [or] made any public expression of his political opinions," Cushing had shown himself to Hawthorne as "warmly in favor" of Melville's appointment.³⁸ The President likewise had indicated to Hawthorne that he would support Melville in the cabinet discussion. But neither man could afford to be guided by personal inclination.³⁹ Pierce was a compromise leader, and by Cushing's counsel his policy was to establish party harmony, which meant to apportion the patronage pie evenly among the factions he was seeking to hold together at the Democratic family board. After four lean Whig years, hundreds of hungry Democrats were clamoring for their shares in the pie and jealously watching each slice as it was bestowed. Relatively few government jobs on the thousand-page official list paid more than \$2,000 annually, and every such office had dozens of claimants, each supported by a file of urgent letters. Melville's file was one among myriads, and the Administration had no way of guessing that its disposition would be a matter of moment to posterity. The task of settling the claims occupied the President and his cabinet through April and May almost to the exclusion of other business. Personal inclination of the President, Cushing, Marcy, or other officials, determined some choices, such as the President's assignment of Liverpool to Hawthorne; but political expediency was the ruling criterion, and the fat jobs were distributed, to sections, factions, and individuals, by a plan of allotment designed to build up a strong party organization.⁴⁰ The wonder is less that Melville should have been scanted than that Hawthorne should have been allowed so generous a slice of the pie for friendship and a campaign biography.

Cushing's "confidential" reply to Shaw's letter, a month later,

³⁷ See Claude M. Fuess, *Caleb Cushing* (New York, 1923), II, 109 ff.; also Roy F. Nichols, *Franklin Pierce* (Philadelphia, 1931), pp. 251-58; *The Democratic Machine*, pp. 122 ff.

³⁸ Allen to Cushing, Pittsfield, April 30, 1853 (Cushing papers, Library of Congress), in reply to Cushing's note of April 28. Cushing was assured by Edwin Croswell's strong letter of April 29, that "Politically, so far as a literary devotee can be supposed to enter the political arena—from which let us pray that he be exempt—he has ever been a true democrat." Cushing papers, Library of Congress.

³⁹ Maunsell B. Field, who was seeking the office of Chargé d'Affaires at the Court of Sardinia, in 1853, gives an amusing account of his experience of Pierce's personal unreliability in the matter of promised appointments. *Memories of Many Men*, pp. 162-74.

⁴⁰ Nichols, *The Democratic Machine*, pp. 187 ff.

June 3, 1853, came after the major decisions had been made: "I have presented the case of Mr. Melville to the President & to Mr. Marcy, and write to you thereupon. If Mr M can so arrange as to live at one of the less lucrative consulates in Italy, say Rome, I think it can be arranged. Please to write to me immediately on this point."⁴¹ The phrase "less lucrative" robbed this offer of value, as Allan Melville at once pointed out when Shaw consulted him. "Yours of the 8th reached me yesterday advising me of the recent information you have received through a confidential source from Washington respecting a consulate for Herman," Allan wrote. "There can be no consulship in Italy, not even Rome, where the fees would amount to sufficient to make it an object for Herman to accept a position there."⁴² Melville's brother was remembering what his father-in-law should have known well enough, that it was pointless for him to accept any post whose income would not free him from the necessity of slaving with the pen to feed his family. But possibly Shaw, who was strangely ill-informed throughout, had no idea how little the post at Rome was worth.⁴³ The hard-headed Allan had dug out dollars-and-cents facts about all the possible appointments, and he went on to tell Shaw, "I have positive information of the value of the Antwerp consulate and understand it to be worth from \$2,500 to \$3,000. Should this be tendered, Herman ought to accept it." Herman was with Allan in New York at this time and must have participated in the decision; and probably Shaw talked it over with him there before relaying the rejection of Rome to Cushing on June 14, the morning Shaw sailed for Europe. His note made no allusion to Antwerp.

I received your very kind & obliging letter respecting Melville, was duly pleased; in the haste of leaving Boston, I had not time to answer it, & did not know how to answer it definitely. I am satisfied, that such are Mr. Melville's circumstances, that he could not with propriety take a consulate, the emoluments of which, would not be sufficient to meet the expenses of a family, at a foreign station, which would be necessarily large. I feel under great obligation to you for your kind intent, and in behalf of Mr. Melville [wish] to express his grateful acknowledgment.⁴⁴

⁴¹ MHS.

⁴² Allan Melville to Lemuel Shaw, New York, June 11, 1853, in Weaver, *Allan Melville*, pp. 345-46.

⁴³ As late as May 24 Shaw wrote to his son Lemuel: "I believe I have not informed you, that the friends of Herman Melville have been making an effort to get him appointed to the consulship, at Honolulu, Sandwich Islands, and his brother Allan has strong hopes that he will be appointed by the present administration. His interests have been earnestly advocated by Mr. Hawthorne, the poet & literary man whom you will recollect; he has recently published a life of Prest Pierce, & he himself has been appointed Consul at Liverpool, probably one of the best offices in the gift of the government." MHS. Lemuel, Jr., replied to this information, in a letter to his mother, June 16, 1853, "I am astonished Herman wants to go to the Sandwich Islands but I suppose he knows best. He has certainly written more than enough books for his reputation." MHS. The last sentence probably refers to *Pierre*.

⁴⁴ Cushing papers, Library of Congress. In this note Shaw also reminded Cushing of John Oakes Shaw's application for an appointment.

And here the whole matter of a consulship for Melville lapsed.

Just how little value Cushing's offer had is betrayed by his random specification of "say Rome" among "the less lucrative consulates in Italy." Even by the end of the summer not one of the dozens of disappointed office-seekers had chosen to console himself with the Roman post.⁴⁵ The truth is that such consulates could be had almost for the asking, as another popular writer, Donald Grant Mitchell (*Ik Marvel*) found. Deciding late in April, 1853, to visit Europe, he resolved to seek a consular post and went to Washington for that purpose. There he ran into Hawthorne, holding his own not with brandy but char-*treuse*, among the guzzling politicians at Willard's Hotel, and warmly asserting the dignity and deserts of the profession of letters. He made Hawthorne's acquaintance, and was introduced by him on May 1 and 2 to Cushing, Marcy, and Pierce. At this time, Mitchell later wrote, Cushing "spoke to Mr. Hawthorne of my appointment to the Mediterranean as certain, if I urged it." Mitchell urged it, and with no ado on May 24 he was commissioned consul at Venice. The reason for his success he saw clearly: "as the place had no pecuniary value, and was hence unsought, the path to it was made easy and flowery."⁴⁶ And all this occurred during the month before Cushing wrote "confidentially" to Chief Justice Shaw, concerning an appointment to Rome, which, like Venice, carried no salary, "I think it can be arranged." A statement something less than ingenuous! To obtain such an appointment, actually, Shaw's influence and the letters Allan and Peter had so assiduously piled up were not necessary at all.

The reasons Melville got no salaried or remunerative consular post are pretty clear. His strong supporting letters gave him some chance; but he had not enough political or personal influence to place him ahead of other claimants. The letters came from all factions of the Party in New York, but this was as much a weakness as a strength; for to no faction was his success a reward, and therefore to none was his rejection an affront. Consulships were in Marcy's province, and he had more pressing political and personal demands to satisfy in New York than any that Melville could make on him. Thus the consulship at Honolulu he conferred by personal choice upon Benjamin F. Angel, a lawyer and politician from Geneseo, New York. Angel had been his devoted henchman for years, had labored for his nomination to the presidency in 1852, and had voted for him up to the last ballot in the Baltimore convention. The post Angel had sought was the commissionership to the Sandwich Islands, his reason being the same as Melville's: he hoped the climate would restore his health,

⁴⁵ *Register of Officers and Agents . . . in the Service of the United States on the Thirtieth September, 1853* (Washington, 1853), p. 10, lists no consul at Rome, or at Ancona or Ravenna, all unsalaried posts.

⁴⁶ Donald Grant Mitchell, *American Lands and Letters* (New York, 1891), II, 244-52; Waldo H. Dunn, *Life of Donald G. Mitchell: Ik Marvel* (New York, 1922), pp. 256 ff.

which had been "a good deal broken by close application to business." The consulship at Honolulu was the nearest the Secretary of State himself could come to meeting even so urgent a political and personal obligation.⁴⁷ Similarly, as late as October 26, the post at Antwerp was given to Alois Dominic Gall, a member of the Democratic State Central Committee of Indiana, who was recommended by an array of Indiana politicians and German-Americans.⁴⁸ Honolulu, Antwerp, or any such lucrative post was beyond all effective claims that could be made for Melville, who was not a friend of Pierce, Marcy, or Cushing, and who had neither done political service nor could threaten political reprisal.⁴⁹

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⁴⁷ See "Benjamin F. Angel, U. S. Minister to Sweden," *Democratic Review*, new series, XL (1857), 332-34. Angel's appointment, made while the Senate was not in session, was rejected by the Senate in April, 1854, months after he had taken up residence in Honolulu. The rejection was a stroke in the factional strife in New York. In July, 1854, Davis A. Ogden of New York was nominated to the post, and confirmed.

⁴⁸ NA.

⁴⁹ Hawthorne was speaking the truth when he later wrote that he had failed to get Melville an appointment "only from real lack of power to serve him." *English Notebooks*, ed. Randall Stewart (New York, 1941), p. 432. Melville's appointment to Honolulu would have been interpreted as a direct slap by the missionaries who still dominated the government there. His name was unsavory likewise to shipowners against whose unjust treatment he could be expected to protect sailors in a more than perfunctory manner, as did Hawthorne at Liverpool (see Hall, *Hawthorne, Critic of Society*, pp. 14-25).

REALISM: AN ESSAY IN DEFINITION

By GEORGE J. BECKER

When, in the 1880's at the high tide of the French Naturalistic movement, two French critics, A. David-Sauvageot and E.-M. de Vogüé, sought to undermine the dominance of the new school of writing, they attempted to argue that there was in reality nothing new about it and exhorted their contemporaries to turn to the realism of earlier writers or in any case to that of George Eliot and the Russians as sane and artistic manifestations of a technique and a spirit which Zola and his group had perverted and bowdlerized.¹ On the other hand, as one reads through American criticism of the time, one finds general recognition that something new had come into existence, and the term *realism* is found applied hospitably or acrimoniously to all the new literature, to the works of Tolstoy and Dostoevski, of Ibsen and Strindberg, of Zola, of Howells, and of Howells' pet Spaniards and Italians—even to "the natty novels of Mr. Henry James, Jr." Thus, the fact that the movement was born and bred in violent controversy helped to obscure the meaning of a term which in any event would probably have never been very precise. To this day we may discern a tendency to deny the existence of *realism* as anything new or distinct or to make it cover a multitude of tendencies which the critic is at the moment determined to extol or scorn. We need to push through the partial apprehension of partisanship and seek the lineaments of realism in the works which have appeared under that banner in the last eighty or ninety years.²

There can be no question that there is a modern realistic movement, initiated about the time of, though not exclusively by, Flaubert, which has produced one of the most violent battles of the books ever to take place, a movement which, to judge by continued discussion and literary practice, has not yet come to the end of its influence. It is a commonplace of criticism that this movement is in a general way closely allied with the development of physical science and positive philosophy, both of which had, by the middle of the nineteenth century, brought many to distrust the conventional images of life and the way life was lived. To my mind, it is inadequate to say that it is merely an extension of the preceding movement which we call Romanticism; for, seeking truth, it assailed its predecessor as flagrantly untrue and incapable of achieving truth, not as merely inadequate or incomplete.

¹ See A. David-Sauvageot, *Le Réalisme et le Naturalisme dans la Littérature et dans L'Art* (Paris, 1890); and E.-M. de Vogüé, *Le Roman Russe* (Paris, 1886).

² The definitions of realism presented in the appendix (see pp. 195-97) have been chosen primarily with the purpose of demonstrating the wide variations of meaning given to the term by conscientious critics. A few, however, have been culled from early periodical criticism to substantiate the charge of partisanship.

To accompany the new moral and social orientation which it recognized, it demanded also a new scale of literary values and set off the argument, still continuing, as to whether realism is or can be art. I shall not touch on that controversy, except to say that art is obviously that which induces an aesthetic effect, whatever that is, and that such an aesthetic effect may clearly be conditioned by education, experience, or philosophic bias, with the result that the new movement, like those before it, had to develop new aesthetic responses.

It seems to me that this movement, and this term, of which we are speaking is no more a single thing than was Romanticism. It is possible to isolate at least three major aspects, not to mention certain local phases traceable to peculiar conditions of time and place. The perennial phase, hence the one to consider first, is what may be called realism of method. This has apparently always been present in literature for the sake of occasional adornment or contrast, particularly for the sake of humor and the pleasure that comes from recognition of the familiar. But until recent generations these touches of nature have usually been incidental to the main purpose or point of view of the work of art, and there are surprisingly few writers, even in recent generations, who have consistently through an entire work portrayed real people, actuated by real motives, performing real actions. Rather the place of the realistic detail has been comparable to that of the gargoyle on a cathedral, of little consequence to the over-all effect of the structure. This type of detail may consist in the rendition of common speech and manners, in a faithful localism of descriptions, or in such life-giving touches as Shakespeare uses in moments of crisis (e.g., Lear's "Unbutton me this button," or Richard III's "What, is my beaver easier than it was?"). In general, when it is used, invention has given way to observation, but such is rarely the spirit of the whole work. The goal is not over-all truthfulness, but occasional delight.

Realism of method, as the modern movement has made it known to us, is a wider and more-encompassing thing. It is to this that Howells' phrase, "the truthful treatment of material," has reference. It aims at nothing less than the faithful and complete rendition of reality, and, for the most part weak in metaphysics, it has usually fallen back on a kind of Benthamite doctrine that the most real is that which is experienced by the greatest number. At the very beginning of the movement Champfleury stated: "I understand by realism the bringing of the greatest sum of reality into the narration of events, into the adventures of the personages, into their language. . . . I want the novel, a work of fiction, to appear as true as a court record." And as de Sola Pinto has phrased it more recently, ". . . realism is the element in art which is concerned with giving a truthful impression of actuality as it appears to the normal human consciousness."³ It may lead to the

³ V. de Sola Pinto, "Realism in English Poetry," *Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association*, XXV (1939), 81.

veritism of Hamlin Garland, to the "realism of the commonplace" of Howells, to what critics often decry as "reportorial realism." It has brought us the "slice of life" and the Whitmanesque catalogue. There has even been manifest in recent years a tendency to subordinate the word to the photograph, as exemplified in MacLeish's *Land of the Free* or Caldwell's *You Have Seen Their Faces*. Practitioners of realism are not absolutely committed as to the precise techniques they are to follow. Like all writers they engage in experiment, but their efforts are conditioned by their sense of the over-all importance of verifiable fact. They are all governed more or less closely by three basic concepts, which taken together form the fundamental creed of those using the realistic mode.

The first of these is reliance on documentation and observation. When Romantic criticism wished to give the accolade, it praised an author's *invention*. To the realistic writer the ideal lies at the other extreme; he wishes to come as close as possible to *observed* experience. Thus Flaubert went into transports of delight when, the day after writing the speech used in the *comices agricoles* scene, he found a newspaper report of an actual speech couched in almost identical terms. Thus, before setting the events of *L'Assommoir* in motion, Zola filled notebooks with quantities of minute observations of working-class milieux, which were to take shape as la Rue de la Goutte d'Or. The realist, of course, does not rely exclusively on notebook or documents. He usually has access to a memory richly stored with sharply recollected experience and may draw out of it a portrayal of a whole social complex which is overwhelmingly realistic in detail, as Farrell has done in his many novels of the Chicago Irish.

Whatever the limitations of this method, it has had some signal successes. We need only compare the dialogue appearing in American fiction before 1890 to be aware what an element of veracity has been added today. Steinbeck's Okies, Motley's Chicago hoodlums, Lardner's monologuists, Negroes as presented by half a dozen writers—all of these speak in the flesh. For at least a generation we have had a rich and varied transcript of actual American speech. In general, the realist has accompanied this with an accuracy of external detail and a passion for fact in the representation of the external aspects of behavior and environment which lend an air of absolute validity to fiction, making it no longer a feigned thing in the sense that either Touchstone or Plato meant. Ignoring the implicit sneer, this is what George Meredith had in mind when he wrote: "Little writers should be realistic. They would then at least do solid work."

This reliance on fact is closely seconded by an effort to approximate the norm of experience. No piece of literature is photographic; there must always be reliance on fairly drastic selectivity. The realist is wary of exceptional truths, even though they are attested by the daily newspaper or a Congressional report. Since, as we shall see later, he tends

to write about another segment of the population than that which has traditionally read or been reflected in polite letters, he is often accused of a deliberate slanting of his focus in the direction of the humdrum, the unheroic, the animal, the sordid, the pessimistic, the meaningless. It is always possible to cite against him, in even the most miserable group he may have chosen to depict, contrary instances of spirituality, heroism, and successful adaptation. If his canvas is broad enough, he may sometimes make allowance for what he considers the exceptional; for example, glimpses of the rising Danny O'Neill punctuate the descent of Studs Lonigan. He may even apply his method to a study of the exceptional case, which is essentially what Dreiser did in all his earlier novels. But in general he keeps his eye on a statistical norm. As he sees it, the lives of most people are a losing fight, a dull misery. Few personalities are rigidly black or white in character or behavior. Most institutions fall far short of their own pretensions or the valuations placed upon them by interested adherents. Few people are caught up in the excitement of hair-raising events, are ensnared by deliberate villainy, or are rescued as the executioner's axe is raised. Or, undergoing such experiences, they meet them with little awareness of their dramatic nature, persist in being puppets though the situation is a setting for supermen. This conception affects the formal aspects of the work also. It is necessary that the straight line of plot be broken, that the conventional devices of suspense and climax be eliminated. The *scène à faire* becomes the scene which is deliberately omitted; the story merely stops instead of being brought to an elaborately resolved ending; loose ends are no longer a flaw but rather an essential element in the pattern. In short, the goal is to make the plot (in the technical sense) as unsensational as possible for the sake of a faithful reproduction of "real" life.⁴

Presiding over these two conceptions is the ideal of objectivity. In one sense this is a purely technical feature of the novel (the chief vehicle of realism). It has meant that the novel tends to move away from the panoramic to the dramatic method. The author withdraws, leaving his characters to act out their own destinies without his intervention or comment. He wishes to place as little of a barrier as possible between the reader and the experience set down in words. He believes that his adherence to fact and to the norm of experience gives his work impact and essential meaningfulness, so that his role as chorus is superfluous, even damaging, to an honest and truthful statement.

Objectivity, of course, means more than this. It means that the writer takes great pains not to allow any personal prejudice or predilection to divert him from presenting things as they are. He keeps asking himself: Is this the way I see things, or the way I think I

⁴ Jules Romains' monumental *Men of Good Will* is a particularly apt illustration of this aspect of method, especially in the elimination of the dramatic scene for which careful preparation has been made.

should see them, or the way other people expect me to see them? His ambition is the dispassionate approach of the scientist; his delusion, that manifested by Zola, that he can actually manipulate data to a conclusion as coldly impersonal as that of the laboratory. At his best he serves no interest; he has no preconceived views of how things should be; he observes and he states. It seems to me idle to deny that strict objectivity is impossible, that in the long run a personal view of man and the universe will emerge in even the most realistic work. The essential thing is that such a view eschews fancy and intuition, is reluctant to go beyond the facts, and is earnest in its pursuit of all the facts.

Unfortunately the maintenance of objectivity, even thus limited, is extremely difficult. The realistic writer attempts to retrace the steps by which he arrived inductively and empirically at certain generalizations. But having arrived at those generalizations, he is now in danger of manipulating his data to strengthen them, to simplify them, or, especially, to heighten them as literature. Though originally he served no interest and adhered to no philosophy of social action, the very process of experience which he has undergone may lead him to feel the necessity of such adherence. In that case, when he retraces his steps, it will be no longer in an empirical but in a doctrinaire spirit. An excellent case in point is that of Maxim Gorki, in youth an admirable practitioner of uncommitted realism, in later life an advocate of what he called "active romanticism," that is, a form of writing which would advance the class struggle. This is, in general, the delicate point at which realism ends and overt social criticism begins. If a writer really gives a complete and searching account of most of our institutions, readers are almost certain to find them unsatisfactory and to press for change or amelioration. If, however, the author declares that he finds such and such a situation bad and intends to write a book to prove it, then he has a thesis and has moved on into the field of social action, thereby almost necessarily compromising his objectivity. Certainly a great social awareness has been produced through the instrumentality of realistic writing, but the two things should not be equated.⁵

If this question of method were all that realism means or has meant, I doubt that after the first shock it would find anything but general and dispassionate acceptance as one of several possible ways to write literature. Its qualities are admittedly necessary, for even the habitual soarer into the empyrean blue needs to rest foot on solid ground once in a while. It also has certain obvious limitations: it runs the risk of dullness and, if the author is especially zealous in his documentation,

⁵ Jean-Paul Sartre denies this. In "The Word as Mirror," *SRL*, XXX (December 6, 1947), 25-26, he declares: "Those who write for a living know that the word is action: they know that unveiling something means changing it and that one cannot unveil without intending to change. They have given up the impossible and immoral dream of drawing an impartial picture of society and *la condition humaine*."

of heaviness. Above all, it carries its own temptation to falsehood; in an effort to be interesting, an author may overdraw the unheroic qualities of his characters or pile up the miseries of their experience until he has created monsters crawling over a slimy bed of degradation. (*McTeague* and *The Jungle* immediately come to mind as examples of a method gone wrong.) Or, on the defensive because critics say his books have no meaning, the realistic writer may try to inflate the humdrum events and personalities about which he writes into universal symbols of far-reaching significance. Actually the realist usually chooses *representative* cases, so that the straining into symbolism is unnecessary, as well as in violation of the method.

It is with the second manifestation of modern realism that genuine violence of reaction begins. This second phase is no more than an outgrowth and extension of the first, but it is so important that we should disengage it and look at it separately, calling it realism of subject matter. It is Champfleury again who early hit on this when he defined realism as "the choice of modern and popular subjects." Flaubert created a kind of slogan with his phrase, "Yonville donc vaut Constantinople." The Brothers Goncourt issued a manifesto in the form of a preface to *Germinie Lacerteux* (1864), in which they asked whether in the nineteenth century "the people ought to remain under literary interdict and auctorial disdain," answering that the novel should grow and extend itself, that it should become a serious, impassioned study of society. It is clear that as soon as an effort is made at over-all realism of method, new material is bound to come in, and one of the salient features of the movement has been its continued reaching out for new territories. The predominantly middle-class subject matter with which the earlier realists began is not adequate; it cannot be used accurately without reference to other social levels. Moreover, the increasing emphasis on sociological study in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries made it clear that man must be viewed in relation to a vastly complicated social complex and that the norm of existence, of which we have spoken above, lay at a decidedly different level from that traditionally depicted. This conclusion was often reached with reluctance, or even partly denied, as in the case of Howells. Gorki reports a significant conversation with Tolstoy on this subject, in which the latter said to him:

"You've seen many drunken women? Many—my God! You must not write about that, you mustn't."

"Why?"

"Why?" Tolstoy repeated, then continued thoughtfully and slowly: "I don't know. It just slipped out . . . it's a shame to write about filth. But yet why not write about it? Yes, it's necessary to write about everything, everything."⁶

⁶ Maxim Gorki, *Reminiscences of Leo Nikolaevich Tolstoy* (New York, 1920), pp. 81-82.

Reluctantly or eagerly, this has been the attitude manifested by the newer and more independent writers, until today we have, in fact, largely fulfilled Taine's description (of Naturalism specifically) as "a great inquest on man, on all situations, all flowerings, all degenerations of human nature." It is unlikely that there are any great surprises left, though there are areas of personal and social experience still to be graphically depicted, and, of course, social forms are themselves in continual flux, necessitating new portrayals.

At the simplest level is the effort that each modern literature has made at a complete social and psychological inventory under the impetus of this spirit (and no doubt of the nationalism of our time). As the United States moved away from the Atlantic seaboard, there was increased dissatisfaction with the English stereotypes which pervaded our writing and made it false, in the eyes of the untutored at least. As early as the 1880's there was a native and decorous local colorism which, uncontrolled by any adherence to realism of method, was likely to bog down in sentimentalism and sensationalism. The muckraking movement at the turn of the century was another effort at inventory and a clear invasion of new fields of subject matter. Finally, after the first World War, there arose a group of writers who adopted the realistic method as a matter of course and at the same time avidly tracked down the manifold and kaleidoscopic manifestations of American life.

Alfred Kazin speaks of their product as "a realism concerned . . . with the sights and sounds of common life, with transcriptions of the average experience, with reproducing, sometimes parodying, but always participating in, the whole cluster of experiences which make up the native culture."⁷ Certainly much of the writing in this country since 1920 has sprung from sheer exuberance over American speech, American types, American locales, even the American way. It was a tremendous stimulus to young writers to discover that their experience, their vision of the way things are, was legitimate material for writing, and that with a certain amount of self-censorship they could even find their way into the *Saturday Evening Post*. A particularly active force has been the representatives of groups which are just achieving literacy. We now have Negroes writing in abundance, shattering the image of Uncle Tom and giving us Negro reactions as they really are. In the thirties Pietro di Donato and Joe Pagano began to speak for those of Italian extraction, James T. Farrell for the Irish, William Saroyan (briefly) for the Armenians. The psychology of the Jewish middle class in New York was explored long ago by Ludwig Lewisohn and Clifford Odets, and accounts of Jewish childhoods in Boston, San Francisco, and Zanesville, Ohio, are beginning to come in.

There is no visible end to this stream, for many areas of the popula-

⁷ Alfred Kazin, *On Native Grounds* (New York, 1942), p. 207.

tion remain inarticulate and will insist, as they find their voices, on telling what life is from the point of view of the Portuguese-American, the Japanese-American, etc., etc. In addition, there is the whole gamut of industrial and occupational life to run (witness the novels of Albert Halper) and, more important, the complex field of social relationships. We have had competent novels analyzing anti-Semitism during the last few years. Patterns of industrial conflict have been successfully analyzed by John Steinbeck and Meyer Levin. There is a whole literature which is trying to get at the essential South in contrast with that conventionally portrayed in *So Red the Rose* and *Gone with the Wind*. And now, of course, we have a genuine war experience, widespread and prolonged, which will engage the attention of many writers for the next decade.

All this is a labor of love, or at any rate of nostalgia. But there is also the effort, for which Zola is chiefly responsible, to depict the real average, the common, essentially animal man, the being largely dominated by the *id*. Contrary to frequent report, this is usually not a labor of love, but springs from a painful sense of duty, a desire to keep the record straight, a sense of irritation and impatience with those who generalize about human beings from the airy penthouse of an ivory tower. As mentioned earlier, the first step was to shatter the image which the bourgeois reflected back to himself, and Flaubert gave us Homais. Then there was a descent into lower social levels, into the working-class slums of Paris. Gorki went to "the lower depths," among those without any social status at all. Convinced that the physiological man is highly important, writers began to linger over the more indelicate phases of human behavior. Sexuality was fully explored and reported. In the fullness of time we could not fail to achieve Leopold Bloom. This effort can be seen to have moved in two directions: it has sought to depict the average man in reference to a whole society and has therefore taken us to a lower social level; and it has attempted to portray *l'homme moyen sensuel* within any group, thus peeling off the varnish of decorum.

Finally, there has been a vigorous exploration of what Dostoevski called the "underground man." This is what might be called a vertical extension of realism. Dostoevski began it, Freud verified it clinically, and it has given us the "interior monologue" or "stream of consciousness" technique as a literary device. It is something of an anomaly. It is necessary to the complete depiction which is the goal of the realist, yet it is essentially subjective, transcending overt and documentary fact and in the last analysis verifiable only in the consciousness of the reader. However, it is not invented, and now that the shock is over and *Ulysses*, for example, is accepted, reasonable people are willing to admit that there is a correspondence between their own underground natures and those portrayed in realistic fiction.

If these claims seem rather sweeping and it appears that I would

allow nothing to escape the realistic dragnet, I can only repeat that the conception that *everything* must be written about grows out of the belief in fact as a way to truth which underlies realistic writing. It should be obvious that without application of the realistic method, fields such as we have just mentioned will be anything the author wants to make of them—except realistic. On the other hand, if we are really to know man and his fate, there can be no cubbyholes not open to inspection. No doubt we do too often get nothing but jumbled and pedestrian assemblages of data, but the motive behind this is a vital one, and it is an essential part of the complex called realism. There is no doubt that in the area just discussed writers have not infrequently gone astray. Novelty is and always has been one of the things they seek. The extension of subject matter has offered an easy sensationalism, almost identical in spirit with that practiced by the Romantics over a century ago, and it is sometimes hard to draw the line between the serious writer who probes the sores of society and the miasma of the human mind because he must in pursuit of important truth, and the sensationalist who seeks merely to exploit shocking material. The true realist in his explorations offends both the idealist, who refuses to admit that things are so, and the decorous man of the world of eighteenth-century stamp, who knows they are so but considers it necessary at all costs to keep the unseemly concealed if the uneasy equilibrium of civilized society is to be maintained at all. From both these quarters the charge of sensationalism is likely to come.

The third phase of realism may be called philosophical and seems to rest on a contradiction. It has already been pointed out that while the basic ideal of the movement was and is absolute objectivity, it is almost impossible not to pass at least implicit judgment on man and his fate. As the whole of human behavior and experience was examined and portrayed with increasing exactness, the writer was forced to make statements about man and the condition of mankind which were in violent opposition to those traditionally accepted. It happened quite often that he said that life had no meaning, no telic motion, and that man was a creature barely escaped from the level of animal behavior and driven by forces over which he had no control and in which he could discern no purpose. Such a view was a direct reflection in literature of the prevalent mechanistic science of the last half of the nineteenth century. It was popularized particularly by Zola, whose twenty-volume portrayal of the twin forces of heredity and environment remains the basic statement of that point of view, which he denominated Naturalism. The position is in general that which was well expressed some twenty years ago by Joseph Wood Krutch in *The Modern Temper*; it is one which neither revealed religion nor private mysticism can tolerate, and even political authority is suspicious of it as encouraging to despair and idleness. Yet it is the port to which the realistic bark keeps returning, and many strictly realistic

writers seem to have some such conception, although it is often not overtly expressed. In view of the cataclysm threatening society and a new tightening of the causal screws by theoretical science, it is possible that a modified version of this philosophy may become popular again and be reflected in a new literary outburst.

There is among journeyman critics a considerable confusion as to the relation of the terms *realism* and *naturalism*. There are those who equate the latter term with "stark realism," that is, any account which is unpleasantly sordid and plays down man's so-called higher nature. The term is widely and loosely used to indicate any of the more forthright recent American realistic writers, whether they are Naturalists or not. Certainly usage can do what it will with a word, but in essence and in origin, Naturalism is no more than a philosophic position taken by some realists, showing man caught in a net from which there can be no escape and degenerating under those circumstances; that is, it is a pessimistic determinism. Knowing philosophers, we are aware that the same set of data are subject to a variety of interpretations. What is surprising about the realists is that for three generations they have shown fair unanimity in their conclusions, when they have felt impelled to reach any conclusions at all, and those who have revolted against those conclusions have been generally driven into the area of literary practice which we may roughly indicate as symbolism, that is, to the presentation of data as meaning more or other than they ostensibly do mean.

What is often overlooked is that the precise workings of the naturalistic mechanism vary. Zola was attacked on two scores: he placed an undue reliance on heredity (a theory subsequently proved false at that), and he ignored the workings of consciousness, however caused or motivated. Since his Rougon-Macquart series, there has been a decided shift of emphasis from heredity to environment, from single or simple cause to multiplicity of causes, from epiphenomenalism to interactionism. Dreiser often mentioned blind biological forces which he called "chemisms," but the significant element in his pattern of causality seems to be societal conditioning. This analysis is much more subtly and more completely carried out by Farrell, with the result that the drama of *Studs Lonigan* is played out in the protagonist's consciousness, mental states and attitudes themselves becoming part of the causal network. Yet in the final result can it be argued that Studs Lonigan is any less inextricably caught and doomed than the more simply analyzed Gervaise Coupeau?

Stated in the mildest possible terms, Naturalism insists on the existence of limitations to the efficacy of human personality and endeavor, and it places the boundaries of those limitations rather close at hand. It sees in the activities of consciousness little more than the efforts of an organism at adaptation, certainly in no sense the aspirations of the spirit toward identity with already existent Platonic ideas.

If it makes allowance for random and fortuitous elements in an otherwise causally constituted universe, it generally denies them purpose and inclines toward characterizing them as productive of misfortune rather than of well-being. I cannot agree with Malcolm Cowley that "The effect of Naturalism as a doctrine is to subtract from literature the whole notion of human responsibility."⁸ But since it does tend to place responsibility more remotely and to diminish the importance and significance of the individual man, it is natural, as Cowley says,⁹ that it is not a doctrine to cling to and that many a convinced realist has found himself in later life in some unexpected *galère*. An insistent voice whispers to all of us, and particularly to the sensitive ear of the artist, that our wills, our perceptions, our personalities have meaning and power, that the most wayward products of consciousness are as real as the stone Dr. Johnson kicked so resoundingly two centuries ago.

It is to this feeling that Philip Rahv refers when he declares that the young men of letters are weary of the "endless bookkeeping of existence" of realism and that they are "once again watching their own image in the mirror and listening to inner promptings. Theirs is a program calling for the adoption of techniques of planned derangement as a means of cracking open the certified structure of reality and turning loose its latent energies." He accuses the realistic artist of having lost the power to cope with the ever-growing "element of the problematical" in life, which is what is magnetizing the true artists of our epoch. "Naturalism, which exhausted itself in taking an inventory of this world while it was still relatively stable, cannot possibly do justice to its disruption."¹⁰

It is too early for an autopsy; the incantations of the *avant-garde* are clearly an effort at exorcism of a still living force. As we have seen, this force is to be apprehended as moving in three directions. Its primary goal is, and has been, the truthful representation of observable fact with emphasis upon the norm of experience. Both as a result of that aim and as a means to its fulfillment it has eagerly undertaken a complete inventory of experience and has asserted its right to the use of any and all data. Finally, many of the most able practitioners of realism have reached a philosophical position which may be described as pessimistic determinism. Combinations of and emphasis on these elements will vary from writer to writer, though in all cases there must be a pretty close adherence to the first. Similarly, reactions against the movement will vary in emphasis and point of attack. Perhaps there is no such thing as a *complete realist*, just as the *complete romantic* would be hard to find. Perhaps the goal the so-called realists early set themselves cannot be reached. Yet it is their efforts in these

⁸ Malcolm Cowley, "Not Men: A Natural History of American Naturalism," *Kenyon Review*, IX (Summer, 1947), 417.

⁹ *Ibid.*, IX, 429 ff.

¹⁰ Philip Rahv, "On the Decline of Naturalism," *Partisan Review*, IX (November-December, 1942), 483-93.

various directions which, taken together, make up the so-called realistic movement and, more important, must be understood if we are accurately to assess modern writers or to have any perspective on what happens next.

SOME DEFINITIONS OF REALISM

A. From Early American Periodical Criticism:

1. Charles Dudley Warner, "Modern Fiction," *Atlantic Monthly*, LI (April, 1883): "a wholly unidealized view of human society, which has got the name of realism" (p. 467).
2. Hamilton Wright Mabie, "A Typical Novel," *Andover Review*, IV (November, 1885): "The older art of the world is based on the conception that life is at bottom a revelation; that human growth under all conditions has a spiritual law back of it; that human relations of all kinds have spiritual types behind them; and that the discovery of these universal facts, and the clear, noble embodiment of them in various forms, is the office of genius and the end of art." Modern realism "is, in a word, practical atheism applied to art . . . it dismisses the old heaven of aspiration and possible fulfillment as an idle dream; it destroys the significance of life and the interpretative quality of art" (pp. 425 ff.).
3. Charles F. Richardson, "The Moral Purpose of the Later American Novel," *Andover Review*, III (April, 1885): "What, then, is modern American realism? . . . For the purposes of the present essay it may be sufficient to say that realism stands without, not within; describes without evidence of personal sympathy; seldom indulges in exclamations, reflections, or sermons based upon the narratives which it offers; leaves the reader to draw his own conclusions concerning right and wrong; describes by implication, or minute rather than large characterization; is fond of petty details;
4. H. H. Boyesen, "The Romantic and Realistic Novel," *Chautauquan*, IX (November, 1898): "the new style of novel, dealing with the normal and typical phases of existence" (pp. 96-98).
devotes itself largely to quiet people of the 'upper' or middle classes . . ." (p. 315).
5. B. O. Flower, "Fashions in Fiction," *Arena*, XXX (September, 1903): "The austere, prosaic school of veritism or realism, rigid and scientific in method, photographic in its reflection of life as it exists, and often gloomy in character and depressing in influence . . ." (p. 288).
6. Gamaliel Bradford, Jr., "Mid-Nineteenth-Century Realism," *Reader*, VIII (September, 1906): "realism is the attempt to depict the world as the ordinary man sees it, the average, commonplace man" (p. 452).

B. Scholarly Evaluations:

7. L. W. Smith, "The Drift Toward Naturalism," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, XXII (October, 1923): "Realism, however, is a literary method. The realist makes it his business to tell the truth about life. . . . The realist, as a realist, however, does not assume to believe that the truth must be pleasant . . . that ugliness is not ugliness. In this respect his creed differs from that of naturalism. Realism is willing to remain merely a literary method. Naturalism is a philosophy" (pp. 362-63).
8. W. L. Courtney, *Old Saws and Modern Instances* (London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1919): "Realism means above all else a devotion to the bare and explicit truth of human life and human character, and the avoidance of all romantic or poetic devices for obscuring the main issues" (p. 189).
9. William Gerhardt, *Anton Chekhov* (New York: Duffield Company, 1923): "Realism, that much-abused term, means, or should mean if it is to mean anything at all, the extracting from life of its characteristic features—for life outside the focus of art is like the sea, blurred, formless, and with no design. . . . The realist is he who has succeeded in presenting within the orbit of artistic form (without which there can be no question of art) that which eludes form, is formless" (p. 104).
10. Madeleine Cazamian, *Le Roman et les Idées en Angleterre: L'Influence de la Science (1860-1890)* (Paris: Librairie Istria, 1923): "Le réalisme n'est pas un caractère simple, fixe, qu'on discerne aisément et sûrement à première vue, et qui exclut tout élément étranger ou opposé à lui. C'est un faisceau de tendances qui affectent les unes la forme, et les autres le fond d'un récit. En ce qui touche la forme, c'est, si l'on veut, et d'une façon très générale, une transcription des faits, fondée sur le document, ou l'observation de l'expérience. En ce qui touche au fond, c'est la faculté et la volonté d'exprimer tous les aspects de la vie, et notamment, ceux que l'idéalisme élimine le plus volontiers—la terne monotonie des choses, aussi bien que leur cruauté, et les mesquineries de la conscience, comme la violence des passions. . . . Mais si l'épithète 'réaliste' ne signifie pas le règne exclusif de l'observation et du raisonnement, elle implique du moins leur prédominance, durable ou passagère, sur les partis pris de la sensibilité et de l'imagination" (p. 55).
11. George Boas, *Courbet and the Naturalistic Movement* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1938): "Naturalism was as much a way of thinking about the world as of representing it. . . . If the Naturalistic movement stood for one thing preeminently it was perhaps the transfer of the scientists' point of view into artistry" (pp. v ff.).
12. Bernard Smith, *Forces in American Fiction* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1939): Realists "have all sought to re-

create the experiences of men living in a known or observable scene; and he is not a realist whose readers doubt that what he is depicting is consistent with their knowledge of the world they live in . . ." (p. 135).

13. Arthur McDowell, *Realism: A Study in Art and Thought* (London: Constable Company, Ltd., 1918): "at the bottom of realism, in all its variations, seems to be the sense of actual existence; an acute awareness of it, and a vision of things under that form" (p. 3).
14. Friedrich Engels (in a letter to Miss Harkness, ca. 1891): "Realism, to my mind, implies, besides truth of detail, the true reproduction of typical characters in typical circumstances."

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ERNST WIECHERT'S "DIE BLAUEN SCHWINGEN"

By LYDIA BAER

The second of Ernst Wiechert's published novels, the *Blaue Schwingen*, did not appear until 1925, and has never been highly acclaimed. This first undisguised *Künstlerroman* came into being in the trenches of World War I in the year 1917. It follows his "Werther" novel, *Die Flucht*, and while a pervasive melancholy tone dominates the theme, yet it represents the initial step in Wiechert's real progression to an affirmation of life, tragic though it be. Over and above this, however, it ushers in that uninterrupted enunciation of eternal values which have marked this poet's journey ever since he embarked on his profound search. Between the publication of *Die Flucht* and *Die Blauen Schwingen* there appeared the two bitter and rebellious novels, *Der Wald* and *Der Totenwolf*, in which Wiechert poured out his indignation at what he considered intolerable outgrowths of postwar Germany and the resulting chaos. These books, whose covers even bore the swastika emblem which was later to be identified with the very antithesis of every Wiechert value, were published in a receptive market. Hence they received enormous notice and gave comfort to the hotheads and nationalists who, for a brief space of time, believed they could claim Wiechert as an ally. The fanatics, however, could never reconcile his articles of faith with their tenets in toto, and with each successive publication the tension increased, until the final break came. After 1933 the unfortunate students who wrote doctoral dissertations on Wiechert had to pick their way carefully, and reject with marked disapproval anything which pointed to the "modern humanistic individualism" and the "pietistic trends of thought" of *Die Blauen Schwingen*.¹ The events of the next twelve years were to prove poignantly how basic were these "trends."

¹ One of the most flagrant misinterpretations of Wiechert, which unfortunately is readily available in American universities and has even been used as a book of reference, is a doctoral dissertation by Hans Cramer, *Das zeitgenössische Romanwerk Ernst Wiecherts*, dated Münster i.W., 1934. Cramer, "als Nationalsozialist und gläubiger Christ," has a difficult time proving "wie lebendig Wiechert in dem Drängen der 'jungen Generation' darinsteht, die das Dritte Reich heraufgeführt hat."

It is easy to be wise after the events, but how, even in 1934, this arrant piece of nonsense could have received any serious consideration is difficult to understand. The premises are so absurd when applied to a man who had repeatedly rejected "völkische Programme" in art, and who, about 1928, had rearranged his life on an unequivocally nonpolitical basis, that it seems incomprehensible today how Cramer's work could ever have appeared in print.

Cramer asks plaintively how the author of *Totenwolf* could ever consent to the publication of *Blaue Schwingen* in 1925. He is not surprised at this "modern humanistic individualism," nor the "pietistic trends of thought" in the author of *Die Flucht*, but they represent backsliding. He treats Wiechert's deviations from the political program as errors, and calls Wiechert to task for being what he is. It is a sadly confused document—one of many, to be sure, but deplorable nonetheless.

The book under discussion² was written on the Somme. The foreword tells us that "the shadows of war lie a thousandfold over the writing," which was begun on the Galician front and ended in the trenches of the Champagne:

Austrian officers used to sing the song of the cranes to me every evening, because they knew that it was to assume form. My fatherland died for me in those days, as did my child. And the soul which was still caught among phenomena penned weary words which despaired of the meaning of being. It did not bestow significance upon the confusion of life; on the contrary, it was still looking for it within the latter.³

Die Flucht,⁴ completed in 1913 just before the outbreak of the First World War, was an attempt to narrate, in poetic transformation, the early stages of the author's adult life. There we saw his chief character, Holm, trying to earn his living at schoolteaching, submitting (probably like the author) to nonresponsive publishers manuscripts which satisfied neither them nor himself. The schoolmaster Holm was destroyed in the book that the poet Wiechert might live, in the manner of his incomparably greater forerunner.

There is not only distinct progress in the second prose work, but it is as though Peter Holm's ambition had been projected into the person of Harro Bruckner, only to witness the dissection of that ambition and to see it robbed of the values it had seemed to possess in wishful thinking. Holm had been given to introspection and to long monologues in the presence of his few friends or intimates. Once he went on at great length about his passionate love for people before his disillusionment with the human race set in. This love, however, the speaker explains, did not have its roots in any humanistic soil; he was ambitious to become a leader, to make conquests of men, to inspire them to great deeds. By his art he hoped to extract love beyond all reason from them. Holm said that he had already dreamed of this as a child, and that when he was a student and stood on his hills in the evenings and looked out over the snowy forests, his heart was wont to swell and to be filled with yearning.

Then I was a poet standing at the railing of my loge, while thousands cheered. Women crowded about me, and my soul was submerged in so many shining eyes. . . . Another time I was an artist seated at the piano, evoking world after world from out of the soundless stillness of the hall. Laughter and tears resounded from beneath my fingers, triumphal banners floated o'er the plains, and the deepest grief of mankind was weeping at biers. And below me thousands sat in breathless silence and with closed eyes followed me into realms unlocked by my hand. . . .⁵

Events have proved that the "völkischer" *Totenwolf* was only a phase of Wiechert's progress, and that he returned for permanent values, and with greater artistry, to the lines of the *Blaue Schwingen*.

² *Die Blaue Schwingen* (Regensburg und Leipzig: Verlag Habbel & Naimann, 1925). Henceforth cited as *BS*.

³ *BS*, prefatory pages.

⁴ *Die Flucht*, 5 Tausend (Berlin: G. Grote'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1936). Henceforth cited as *Fl*.

⁵ *Fl*, p. 89.

This is the immature dream of a creative child, or the egocentric vision of a young man who may have begun to shape his materials, but who has not yet begun to travel the hard road of workmanship and devotion to his art. A musician or a poet may believe that success is measured by the dual mastery of art and men, but that is not Wiechert's faith. With his very first book his skepticism with regard to the value of power and success is in evidence. The war, which subsequently entered without cessation as a factor into his thinking and writing, quite obviously increased his mistrust.

The schoolmaster Holm, who fled from life's multiplicity, was a failure because he permitted himself to indulge in his own shortcomings to the point of nihilism. He was unable to cope with the injustices of society, with the mediocrity of his surroundings, with vice and malice on every hand. His author removed him from the scene by violence, appropriately enough by self-destruction; but he never destroyed his wish-dream of the potential artist, and he recreated him in one costume or another through his long years of increasing artistry and deepening perception.

Summing up, then, the manifest progression from the first book to the second—with the terrible interim of war and personal losses: Harro Bruckner does battle with the forces of good and evil as did his predecessor Holm, but success is not his objective at any stage. He plays the violin because he must, and he plays essentially for himself; that is to say, his art is born of passion and genius. His genuine obsession and his fortunate chance meeting with understanding people of culture and wealth enable him to reach the top-most rung of the ladder of success. And yet when he has achieved all this, the fruits of victory are dust and ashes in his mouth; we leave him romantically and utterly incomplete, a saddened human being who seeks answers to unfathomable, age-old questions. His human trials and errors have indeed driven him to inner bankruptcy; nevertheless, he will go on because he must. He will try to pay his just debts and to make a fresh start where irreparable harm has not been done. He will become a pilgrim who has cast off his shining garments and who will go alone into the desert to wrestle with his God.

The following brief summary aims especially at listing the types and symbols which recur with such frequency not only in this, but in Wiechert's other work.

Harro Bruckner's name symbolizes his musical genius, which, amid sordid beginnings within the East Prussian scene which Wiechert knows and loves so well, still flowers into the full-blown career of artist-composer. His mother yields more and more to her weakness, drink and idleness; his stepfather remains consistent in the pursuit of money by whatever means and in the indulgence of secret vices. Harro, like all of Wiechert's chief characters, is isolated and set apart. He has friends who, by speaking his language, penetrate his loneliness. From the gypsy Mischa, who fosters his genius and teaches him the rudiments of the violin, he learns the melancholy theme song of the cranes and the azure wings which are incorporated in the title.

There are a number of subsidiary Wiechert types. Leberecht Ruhoff, a retired teacher, embodies a favorite symbol, the man whose calmness springs from a long life of contemplation rather than of action. His wife represents that character whom Wiechert, with deep emotion, portrays again and again: the mother whose mind has failed since her son was reported missing in the war. Their daughter Maja is Harro's fairy princess: we find her in many garbs.

A wealthy family, to whom his stepfather sends Harro to deliver fish, rescues the boy from the misery of artistic inaction and domestic drudgery. They find him sitting on the top step of the approach to their spacious home, strumming an ancient song on a forgotten violin which he had discovered while waiting, "almost as though he had come out of a lost century and were, in passing, directing a plaintive minstrel's air to silent casement windows."⁶ He responds to their request for a song by playing that beloved air once more: the song of the azure wings.

Harro possesses the ability to retire wholly into his dream world of music and imagination, thus throwing off the hateful present. In this mood "reality becomes dreamlike to him, while magic seems human as it glides softly through all phenomena."⁷ This, his first meeting with his new patrons and friends, takes place in the time of roses; in the solemn stillness of the great park his inward ear, turned from all material things, is enabled to hear the delicate whisper of the trees and the overtones of the blue ether.⁸

The family adopts him. We meet further Wiechert types, easily recognized in later books, for they are all embodiments of human beings who make up the symbols which always populate Wiechert's world: a gentle, noble second mother, who is greatly disturbed by the spiritual travail of Harro's melancholy song; a titled elderly gentleman, Uncle Felix, something of a Keyserling character, with marked peculiarities on the decadent side. It is he who teaches Harro the lesson so impressed on German literature by Jens Peter Jacobsen, the Danish writer: that longing is better than fulfillment, memory better than experience. The women of the family fall into three categories: (1) the mother-saint whom we have just mentioned; (2) the worldly butterfly who seduces Harro; (3) the young girl who is aflame with passion for him, but who loses him to the experienced worldling. There is in addition a type husband, ironically called Siegfried, whose material success as a war-profitier permits indulgence of his wife's wish that Harro be taken into the family. The last member of the family is a sensitive, young-old, crippled boy in whom Harro finds a friend.

As impressions crowd in on Harro's wide-open mind and soul, he discovers, in what he calls the "magic forest," a man who is still more isolated than he is: the symbol of the modern hermit who has fled into the forest for healing from the wounds of civilization. He has tried to escape into anonymity by calling himself "Simplizius"; in the face of the mass murder which he has just witnessed all man-made institutions appear senseless to him. Hurt by life, terrified by cities, disgusted with man's inhumanity to man, only nature's cycle now seems to be valid. As each member of the titled family contributes to Harro's education and to his preparation for the great world of society at large, so it is the function of Simplizius to convince him that he need not struggle against the mating instinct. The experienced eremite expounds the thesis that the riddle of the universe, for which men rend themselves asunder, is revealed to woman without a conflict. This aspect of Harro's education frightens as much as it impresses him.

Within the eternal cycle of the seasons his relentless destiny of surrender to Magda, the predatory female, proceeds. In the cold of winter his yearning well-nigh consumes him; in the growing season the child Harro dies as the man is

⁶ *BS*, p. 45.

⁷ *BS*, p. 46.

⁸ *BS*, p. 45.

born; throughout the voluptuousness of summer the man dwells in grandeur and beauty; but with the first breath of autumn, the idyll is doomed to an end. So the seasons too, symbolic in all of Wiechert's outlook, play their part in the destiny of the individual.

When the time for parting has come, Harro gives way to nostalgic regret for the sacrifice of the child that he was. Now that he has killed that child, he seems to be aware that its soul was engaged in a tortured search for God, for permanence, for eternity, and that it found none of these everlasting values in its sexual adventuring. The azure wings which beat above him now seem heavy and threatening, and he feels constrained to leave the security of his understanding protectors. Here, in the motif of the erring and slain child, is a theme that is slated for innumerable variations and repetitions.

Harro's coming of age, twenty-one, finds him well on the road to fame; his emotional difficulties have been reasonably stabilized by a charmingly uninhibited young creature, who, as his mistress, pours out a wealth of affection and joy upon his beloved person; but despite her buoyancy, which gives him temporary happiness, he never conceals the fact from himself that it cannot last. At the height of his career his first and last love, the fairy princess Maja, who for ulterior reasons has married and is unutterably wretched, enters his life disturbingly once more—a reunion which also proves ephemeral. With deep insight she recognizes that Harro will always be a seeker without a resting-place.

There is no happy ending or conclusion: at the height of his career Harro abandons it and on foot goes forth on an indeterminate quest.

Die Blauen Schwingen is a monument of nostalgic lyricism itself. No other work of Wiechert's is more filled with the undertone of unspeakable longing, of pain and sorrow for the passing of beauty and of all earthly things—themes we find in Jens Peter Jacobsen, who was instrumental in transferring them to German neo-romantic literature.⁹ In Wiechert this yearning and homesickness are a part of his natural endowment and of his heritage. They are linked with a passionate absorption in the wordless poetry of music, the sea of melodic ineffability in which the romantic soul may lose itself. The lines introducing Harro Bruckner might well have come from Jacobsen's pen, the lines that speak of "what sorrow it was to be living, the days that were an equation with longing, how difficult they both were, and how sweet were both, for the others did not bear them, and they were the crown of the chosen."¹⁰

In *Niels Lyhne*,¹¹ one of the textbooks of neo-romanticism, Jacobsen writes of the "tiara of exception which signifies genius, and which a human being has pressed upon his own forehead,"¹² and in another passage this "poet of longing"¹³ refers to the varieties of longing, which at the peak of a memory may be acute and bitter, but with the

⁹ Cf. my article "A Study of Ernst Wiechert with Special Reference to Jens Peter Jacobsen and Rilke," *MLQ*, V (1944), 469-80.

¹⁰ *BS*, p. 3.

¹¹ J. P. Jacobsen, *Niels Lyhne* (Reclam 2551-2552a), translated by M. von Borch, introduction by Theodor Wolff. Henceforth cited as *NL*.

¹² *NL*, p. 57.

¹³ He was generally known as the "Dichter der Sehnsucht" about the turn of the century, when his impress was first felt in Germany. Cf., for example, Carl Busse, "Dichter der Sehnsucht," *Die Wahrheit*, VI (1897), 40-43, 77-84 on Jacobsen.

passing of time will steal into the soul like a lingering illness: "It did not torture him any longer, it weighed upon him so softly that it was almost as sweet as a diminishing pain."¹⁴

Rilke once said, in the early days of his Jacobsen enthusiasm (though the phrase here really refers specifically to Maeterlinck), that he would like to write a drama composed into longing,¹⁵ and Wiechert has here succeeded in writing just such a novel fragment. The story of Harro Bruckner is, however, much more than what is usually thought of as vague neo-romantic yearning; it is, for Wiechert, the second step in the "great confession" that is necessary to poets and which, on the highest rung, operates with humanistic, ethical material. Wiechert is, when all is said and done, and as his development shows so clearly, an educationist, a schoolteacher, as was his Holm. In the story of Harro Bruckner the hero is not the educator but the one who is being educated by many educators, and there is scarcely a novel which follows it in which there is not at least one schoolmaster, good or bad.

The Slavic theme song lends a deep and melancholy accompaniment to the author's basic predisposition to tragedy. His own Slavic endowment¹⁶ responded to the experience in the trenches, which introduced him to it, with the deep emotion which music rouses in him at all times; he knew the simple people who might have sung it, and, in addition, it must have appeared to articulate his own personal tragedies and the universal tragedy of the time:

Siehst du, mein Bruder,
 Siehst du, mein Freund,
 Fliegen die Kraniche in einer blauen Kette dahin?
 Schreien "Kruh...kruh...kruh..."

In der Fremde
 Werde ich sterben.
 Bevor ich noch das Meer überfliege,
 Nutze ich meine Flügel ab..."

Siehst du, mein Bruder,
 Siehst du, mein Freund,
 Fliegen die Kraniche in einer blauen Kette dahin?
 Schreien "Kruh...kruh...kruh..."

Es flimmert mir vor den Augen
 Der endlose Weg..."

Es verschwindet, es verschwindet
 Im blauen Äther
 Die Spur der Kraniche
 Und immer: "Kruh...kruh...kruh..."
 Immer: "Kruh...kruh...kruh..."¹⁷

¹⁴ *NL*, p. 83.

¹⁵ *Briefe und Tagebücher, 1899-1902* (Insel, 1931), November 20, 1900, p. 392.

¹⁶ In his autobiography *Wälder und Menschen* (München: Albert Langen/Georg Müller Verlag, 1936), p. 10, Wiechert calls his racial admixture "Germanic, Slavic, and Romanic," adding that the distinguishing characteristics in the south of what was then the East Prussian province have long disappeared after centuries of intermingling.

¹⁷ *BS*, p. 26.

Stylistically, this blue color of the theme song dominates the story of the azure wings in impressionistic word-painting. In the scale of light and shadow, in the hours of dawn and of darkness, in the atmospheric changes and in the variations of human moods, it plays the most important role in this exemplary "Stimmungskunst." Anyone who is even slightly acquainted with Wiechert will recall that the beloved cranes of his childhood are a memory that is constantly with him and that they have been immortalized by him time and again in essay and story. There will be occasion to speak of colors other than blue at the proper place. The title, however, prepares us for the predominant tone.

There is a fantasy by Jacobsen with the imaginative title: "There ought to be roses here"¹⁸ which Wiechert touches upon in the mature and well-known essay *Der Dichter und die Jugend*¹⁹ many years after the *Blaue Schwingen*—reflections which do not differ greatly in fundamental intent from this early novel. Incidentally, it was this very playlet that remained provocative to Rilke until the end of his life. It was so ideally a word picture that he sometimes came upon a scene in which it appeared to him as though he recognized the very setting which Jacobsen had in mind, for example, 1920 in Switzerland.²⁰ It is a model of impressionistic mood and style, fleeting and delicate, with an undertone of tragic longing.

The decorative figures which Jacobsen summons from his imagination are two actresses personifying the page boys of song and story. They belong to no particular historical period, for Jacobsen remarks that never did a real page correspond to an ideal one.²¹ With his impassioned flair for color, he dresses the younger page in blue, draws him with a voluptuous figure in a close-fitting costume of light blue silk, upon which are woven heraldic lilies in bright gold, and loads the costume with lace. All this is calculated to set off to the best degree of perfection the outlined figure, the magnificent blond hair, and the appropriately beautiful complexion. He thinks of this actress as having a stormy past that belies her carefully cultivated make-up of innocence. He clothes the contrast figure in yellow, describes her as slender to the point of leanness. Moreover, she is to be thought of as unmarried and as having no history; her fine limbs are delicate, her very regular features, of an amber pallor, are shaded by raven

¹⁸ *Sechs Novellen* (Reclam, n.d.), "Hier müßten Rosen stehen," pp. 82 ff. Henceforth cited as *SN*.

¹⁹ Cf. "A Study of Ernst Wiechert," *MLQ*, V (1944), 473.

²⁰ R. M. Rilke, *Briefe, 1914-1921* (Insel, 1937), p. 319: "... wir haben uns geeinigt, daß dies der Balkon sein könnte, auf dem immer wieder Frauen gestanden haben—jene Jacobsens Frauen aus 'Hier sollten Rosen stehen'—und plötzlich stimmte Malans, die ganze Szenerie stimmte, dies strenge Haus, Garten, Rondell und Fontäne, und der Dialog der beiden Pagen schien wie ein vergänglicher Höhepunkt einer hier manchmal eintretenden Jahreszeit." There are roses and "wilder Wein," just as in Wiechert's castle setting.

²¹ *SN*, p. 85.

locks, and she possesses a strong masculine throat. Her appearance thus "speaks a language that is challenging." He makes a point of her mysterious eyes, softly gleaming, deep as the dark leaves in the cup of the pansy and as unfathomable. The word-painter Jacobsen applies the colors of her costume with a skilled brush: it is light yellow silk, ornamented with topaz buttons; the dead-green trousers are slashed with pale purple, while the gray doublet contrasts with the white one of her partner.

So we have Blue and Yellow in a dialogue paraphrased in brief part by Wiechert long years later. The *Blaue Schwingen* contains the essence of the larger portion. Blue, who has the opening lines, yearns to solve the mystery of woman and in so doing to explore the mystery of creation and of existence; yet he is baffled by the intangibles:

There must be magic about the lines on which they are constructed. . . . All my being is concentrated into one single, long, quivering, frightened yearning. What is this? What may it be? It is as though happiness were passing my door invisibly, and as if I had to seize it and hold it fast, and it would have to be mine, so wondrously,—and still I cannot grasp it because I can not see it.²²

Compare with this Harro's thirst for life, as it flows into the tones of his singing violin. As he stands on the threshold of experience, the instrument raises its voice in longing and in question:

What will be the future of my days? What is this light that glows in Maja's eyes, and what is it that rushes in the nights through my sleepless blood? O mystery of distance, O veils that conceal! When shall I know and what is going to be?²³

The mood of the two passages is strikingly similar.

Yellow, making the response to Blue from his balcony, discloses a secret world which eludes the mere realm of the senses:

And if you were sitting at her feet . . . and she, lost in her thoughts, had forgotten the reason for which she had summoned you . . . would you not feel as if she belonged to another world than the one in which you kneel in admiration, as if she had another world within herself, another world around herself, in which her festively clothed thoughts were approaching a goal quite unknown to you; where she is in love, remote from all that you possess, from your world and from all; where she dreams into distance and has desire. . . .²⁴

Harro's world of loneliness and creation, a necessity to him, is another such invisible realm. His isolation is painful and precious, tinged with pleasurable emotions; on the other hand, he is torn by the demands of his senses, which cry for union with another and with others. The tension within him is constant and at times unbearable. He too has asked the questions posed by Blue, and he too returns to the secret places of Yellow's realm: even as a child he has "felt the painful sensation of pleasure in being lonely and unhappy, and again slipped

²² SN, p. 87.

²³ BS, p. 3.

²⁴ SN, p. 88.

ever deeper into true loneliness and true unhappiness."²⁵ But from his very beginnings he has also been on another search which, like his creation, belongs to the hidden chambers of the heart known only to divinity. Harro-Wiechert, quite beyond any implication in Jacobsen's "Proverbe," but entirely like Rilke at an earlier date, is looking for God. He thinks at one time that perhaps He may be found in the perfection of music: "Mischa . . . God is in you . . . if I never learn to play like you . . . I shall drown myself in the lake."²⁶

Blue and Yellow play their dialogue within a setting that bears some resemblance to Harro's new home. If Jacobsen's magnificent old Italian villa is "within the gray and green of such great plains," so on the other hand, is "the gray castle" of the wealthy family "relieved by the green of the surrounding park, the wild grape creeping over the walls, and a wide expanse of green grass before the entrance."²⁷ Jacobsen's beloved roses are enchanted almost into life, form, and scent as he paints the words by which they are wafted into the imaginary playlet. Wiechert ushers Harro into his new home while the roses are blooming against the light and shadow of the gray-green view. Harro's first words to the mother, after he has answered her question about the song of the azure wings, clothe her in a costume reminiscent of Blue: "You ought to wear blue garments," he murmurs, lost in thought, "embroidered in gold, as do the consorts of kings."²⁸

Having created stylistically a variation of Jacobsen's romantic Italian landscape in an actual German setting with which he is familiar, Wiechert transforms, by means of his other characters, the blond and very Germanic Harro, with his dreamy temperament and romantic genius, into the semblance of a page. The most realistic member of the household, the prosaic husband and war-profiteer, employs the appellation first. Indulgent to his wife's notions, as he can well afford to be, he still finds the whim of adopting Harro a bit foolish: "Maria, this is ridiculous. Do you mean to bring him up to be a page? After all, he has his parents."²⁹

²⁵ BS, p. 12.

²⁶ BS, p. 3.

²⁷ BS, p. 44: "Als Harro die lange Kastanienallee auf das Schloß zufuhr und aus dunkelgoldnen Schatten in die grelle Sonne des Rasenplatzes vor der breiten Treppe bog, schien ihm das schweigende Schloß wie ein lange bekanntes Haus. Aus hohen Ahornwipfeln schwang das schwere Dach empor, und der wilde Wein spann sich bis über die grauen Dachpfannen. Die Treppe lag im Schatten der beiden Linden, und auf der andern Seite rauschten grüne Wipfel in ein vornehmes Schweigen. . . . Auf der weiten Rasenfläche blühten die Rosen, sonnige Pfade verloren sich in dunklem Gebüsch."

Cf. SN, p. 83: "Das Grau und Grün solcher großen Ebenen. . . .

"Dann ist es doch viel besser, sich in einem Winkel wie diesem einzuheimeln, zwischen hohen Gartenmauern, wo die Luft lau und weich und still liegt,—auf der Sonnenseite sitzen. . . . und auf den schimmernden, grünen Acanthus im Landstraßengraben schauen, auf die silbergestreckten Disteln und die mattgelben Herbstblumen."

"Auf der langen, grauen Mauer gegenüber . . . dort müßten die Rosen stehen. . . ."

²⁸ BS, p. 45.

²⁹ BS, p. 47.

The motif "page" is thus maintained throughout Harro's connection with the family. As he is leaving in his wagon to return home once more, a girl rushes out on the porch and demands peremptorily to see this story-book figure: "Wait a minute, wait a minute! Where is the page? I want to see whether he has blue eyes."³⁰ Uncle Felix, of whom we shall have occasion to speak at length, perpetuates the fiction: "How pretty he looks, Maria," he said with a polite bow. "Just like a Venetian page."³¹ And to complete the link in the chain binding him to Jacobsen, he names him Lorenzo, as Jacobsen did his incorporation of yearning, Blue. Harro has become Lorenzo permanently for Uncle Felix, who is to expatiate on Jacobsen's philosophy and expound it to his circle.

In experiencing passion, Harro is again cast in the role of page. When the worldly Magda first felt his adoration, her satisfaction was expressed in terms of the same reference: "The love of a page," she thought, "at last . . . at last!"³² To his winter courting she responded with a promise of springtime: "Now you must love me in longing, as all pages do."³³ By this identification, remoteness from reality and temporary romantic character are underscored. We shall speak presently of Magda's expression "love me in longing," which is so nearly a direct Jacobsen quotation.

The undilutedly romantic exponent of Jacobsen's words within Wiechert's setting is the titled elderly relative, before mentioned, who is, of course, unmarried. Wiechert has a great affection for this type, whose ancient culture is reflected in their understanding of the artist's problems, and whose nobility extends to heart and soul.

A typical scene surcharged with mood, which is quite representative of the style of the whole, brings home to the reader the individuality of Wiechert's impressionistic treatment, its application to his own landscape and to his own problems, and his tragic structure. The household is assembled on a night when the air is heavy, a storm is threatening, and the blue curtains are swaying in the breeze as the blue light plays hide and seek in the room. After a Mozart concerto, Harro plays Mischa's mournful songs. Thereupon Uncle Felix is reminded of a university friend who shot himself because he was never able to discover the meaning of one particular gypsy melody which continued to haunt him. As the lightning continues to flash and the bluish unearthly light flits across the garden, Harro answers questions about what he used to do at this time of evening. Gazing out into the park, he relates that he would sit on the shore looking into the water. Sometimes he did not go home at all; and he muses that when the lightning flashes, the water seems twice as deep; it gleams like a sepulchre, the night birds cry like unredeemed souls, and

³⁰ *BS*, p. 49.

³¹ *BS*, p. 51.

³² *BS*, p. 65.

³³ *BS*, p. 83.

the fish begin their wanderings as the raging storm plays upon the water and the blue light wanders across it. It shines into the open eyes of a drowned man lying at the bottom, and as the fish in their nocturnal wanderings pass him, they are blinded by the light that penetrates the deep. So they become frightened and are caught relentlessly by the spread net. By a sudden revelation of his unchildlike deductions, Harro now moves his foster mother to tears. He draws an analogy with the tragedy of humanity: we too are like these poor creatures. All our lives we wander in the deep, while above us the lightning flashes; we roam back and forth as long as we live until the sad morning breaks.³⁴ As the others go into the house, Uncle Felix still stands listening out into the park, takes a faded carnation from his buttonhole, raises it with trembling hand to his face and then lets it drop, with the murmured whisper: "a strange melody."

Shortly thereafter he replies in Jacobsen terms to Harro's question as to what "in Sehnsucht lieben" may mean. In his rambling fashion he has been reminiscing, harking back to adolescent experiences, telling strange incidents of later life, and weaving in the echo of Thora's lovely song in Jacobsen's "Mogens": "In Sehnsucht, Ich liebe in Sehnsucht. . . ."³⁵ To love in longing, he says, means that you preserve a ribbon until the day of your death; it signifies that you are intoxicated by the fragrance of a lock of hair; when you are called upon to fasten an errant shoelace, you forget all about your task and press your lips on a delicate ankle instead. To love in longing means that all this is as sweet to you as the fragrance of an old wine which ought never to be drunk to the last drop, for there will never be another like it on earth. And so those lips are sweetest which we might have kissed but never did.³⁶

This thoroughly romantic view is the identical one of which Yellow seeks to convince Blue, as the two pages live their brief moment:

Take my word for it . . . the love which you find in the embrace of two white arms, with two eyes as your heaven close-by, and the certain rapture of two lips: it is too close to the earth and to dust; it has exchanged the free eternity of dreams for a happiness which can be measured in hours and which grows older when hours have gone by; for though it renews itself constantly, yet each time it surrenders one of those rays which sparkle in an aureole that can never fade around the everlasting youth of dreams. No, you are happy.³⁷

And so the paradoxical final sentence, repeated three times by Jacobsen and taken up again by Wiechert, seems to negate the unalloyed validity of either view.

Such a poetic interpretation may be fascinating to his young listeners, who love to listen to Uncle Felix as he speaks in image and simile to them. But they do not really believe him when he says that love is

³⁴ *BS*, p. 59.

³⁵ *SN*, pp. 41, 54.

³⁶ *BS*, p. 63.

³⁷ *SN*, p. 89.

like celebrating Christmas, with locked doors, a hide-and-go-seek of preparations, peeling bells, and a peeping through keyholes, while the magic departs as the festival arrives and the gifts are acquired. He elaborates by dividing human beings into two classes: those who love eternally in longing and those who love eternally in fulfillment. From an absolute standpoint the first are always unhappy, and the others are always happy. Then he uses the neo-romantic phrase that the "unhappy die in beauty, as we say nowadays";³⁸ while the others usually shoot or poison themselves, or die of disgust. His stories he illustrates tellingly to prove this point from his experiences. At a later date Harro takes his turn at the formula by uttering the thought to the "hermit" that "one ought to die at the height of blossoming," for he is not yet ready to accept the more somber teleology of his friend and teacher Simplizius: "it may be that we were not born to blossom, but that we were born to die."³⁹

Harro's young passion, his first physical venture, is confused by just that indeterminate emotion of which Jacobsen's two pages had been conversing when Yellow spoke the memorable lines last quoted. They had been speaking of that indefinite love of a young man, "which never finds peace, but flutters about restlessly through all the lands of anticipation and all the heavens of hope, sick with the longing to concentrate in the strong, deep ardor of a single great sensation."⁴⁰ He listens to the words that Uncle Felix speaks, but he does not accept them until he has learned the lesson in a bitter experience. All the time that the child Harro is battling convulsively with the man, he wonders whether Uncle Felix is not right and whether fulfillment will not make him just as commonplace as the others, who act as if there were no more mysteries. Will knowledge perhaps be death?⁴¹ He wants the veil to be lifted from the mystery, but he also wants a response from soul to soul as well as from body to body. Magda is incapable of both.

He even fails in solving the mystery of life in the arms of a woman, whereas he had deluded himself into thinking that he might find God in a union of the flesh. The search for God is now paramount:

In the garden of God I found you . . . and I drank of you, so that we became one. But then we were two again, and now you are desecrated. . . . I am looking for God, do you understand that?⁴²

Uncle Felix understands Harro's growing pains very well, and he knows perfectly that the adventure named Magda cannot possibly be a substitution for, or even a supplement to, his dreams. Quite gently and in no arbitrary fashion he reminds the boy again of their earlier

³⁸ *BS*, p. 63. The formula "sterben in Schönheit" as an aesthetic cue dominated the whole neo-romantic movement, and was fruitful for works of art from Platen to Thomas Mann.

³⁹ *BS*, p. 103.

⁴⁰ *SN*, p. 88.

⁴¹ *BS*, pp. 67 ff.

⁴² *BS*, pp. 108 ff.

talks: "You have not solved the riddle after all . . . and perhaps it is still true that those lips are sweetest which one might have kissed and yet did not."⁴³ Jacobsen emphasizes that "perhaps" in the four-fold repetition of the "No, you are happy"⁴⁴ which concludes the discussion between Blue and Yellow. It is Blue, with his avid thirst for life, who has the last word by adjudging Yellow, the dreamer, the fortunate one.

It is Wiechert the poet who would gladly exchange his knowledge and his fame for a reëntury into the paradise of youth, who glorifies the sinlessness of youth as it longs for heights of achievement and fullness of active experience. *Der Dichter und die Jugend* is a paean of praise, as well as a solemn warning, to youth. The poet, who is so deeply in accord with all that is basic in Hermann Hesse, repeats not only the spirit but even the letter of Hesse's title, *Schön ist die Jugend*, in telling the story of Harro Bruckner.⁴⁵ The lost garden of innocence is a haunting memory that assumes thematic proportions in all of Wiechert's art. In the tale of the azure wings he finds a symbol for it, which he embroiders into later novels, and which will be familiar to many readers: the image of the weeping child.

Harro is struck to the heart as Uncle Felix relates one of his strange reminiscences. As he was walking in the forest in the blue light, he heard, above the whispering and the silence, the weeping of a little child; but never was the wanderer able to find that child:

It wept again, but quite from afar, and it seemed to me as though I saw it walking over the stumps of the trees, little, pale, in a dark, short garment. . . . Then I returned to the path, for I was afraid.⁴⁶

The sensitive Harro, filled with turbulent adolescent griefs, greatly disappointed over the aftermath of his love adventure, is thereupon haunted by a dream in which this child calls out to him. He follows the little figure in the dark dress over moss and moor out into the silent, flaming night.⁴⁷ He likens the loss of his innocence to the murder of the child within himself.⁴⁸ It is this sense of guilt which constitutes the driving power in his decision to leave his home. He feels that he, like his first parents, Adam and Eve, had been driven out of the Garden of Eden which his childhood represented, and that he too must become a wanderer on the face of the earth until he shall have found it

⁴³ *BS*, p. 113.

⁴⁴ *SN*, p. 89.

⁴⁵ *BS*, p. 136: "Ja, mein Liebes . . . schön ist die Jugend. . . ." On page 139 the same reference is used bitterly to portray Magda's attraction for adolescents: "'Nun ja . . . sie ist ja auch älter geworden . . . schön ist die Jugend.' Und er lächelte bitter."

⁴⁶ *BS*, p. 88.

⁴⁷ *BS*, pp. 110 ff.

⁴⁸ *BS*, p. 189: ". . . da hatte ich das Kind in mir erschlagen. Es wehrte sich und bäumte sich und schrie, aber ich erschlug es. Und unset und flüchtig muß ich nun sein, bis ich es finde. Dann werde ich schlafen können. Aber es mag wohl sein, daß ich es nicht finde, bis man mich selbst hinausträgt wie ein Kind."

again. His accusation against himself is that he has cast away lightly the incomparable wonder of childhood.

Harro has not yet learned to accept experience, or to recognize the intangible forces at the well-spring of his being. With the exaggerations and the emotional heights and depths of youth, he reaches the place where he wants to give up his search for the realities, heedless of the fact that it is not within his power to will or not to will certain modes of behavior.

In this "Bildungsroman" without an end, in which so many forces and characters contribute to the molding of Harro, there is another phrase that recalls a passage in *Niels Lyhne*. Almost at the last, when Harro has met Maja again and is in despair over the fruitlessness of his searching, when he is—at thirty-one years of age—tired unto death and thinks that this woman may give him surcease from pain, his old friend recognizes clearly that, even if it were possible, it would be no solution. She tells him that *he* has nothing whatever to do with the quest for enduring values. Perhaps he has intended to stop the search, but he cannot; perhaps he has even stopped, but the greater force within him is still at work: "Not you, Harro. . . . But *it!* It is searching within you. . . ." ⁴⁹ So does Niels Lyhne recognize that men who write poetry are not necessarily poets, but that poetry must be dictated by an impersonal "es"—life and the life forces within. ⁵⁰

Simplizius, the fugitive from life, had unveiled before Harro's eyes the eternal values which he himself had found after all else had failed. The futility of material possessions enhances the value of the greatest possession of all: Nature. He owns the forest, the river, the sunset. Moreover, in Simplizius' eyes, Harro possesses one absolute good: his violin, which cannot kill, as does money, and which cannot murder, as do children who have grown up. ⁵¹ He gives Harro an infallible criterion by which he may recognize God, if he is ever to find Him. He will find God unique, like everything that occurs only once, such as birth and death. Thus is the divine distinguished from the human; thus do awe and pleasure identify themselves. ⁵²

Turning once more to style, which is so intimately interwoven with content, the impressionistic use of color is conspicuously in evidence. Like Jacobsen, Wiechert loves colors, though they are frequently more subdued in accordance with his temperament and with the landscape which is dearest to him. Blue and gray are interlaced thematically with the subject matter of the *Blaue Schwingen*. Gray had been largely employed in the somber environment of *Die Flucht*, and there

⁴⁹ BS, p. 186: "'Ich wollte nicht mehr suchen,' sagte er verzweifelt. 'Nicht du, Harro. Vielleicht. Aber es! Es sucht in dir. . . .'"

⁵⁰ NL, p. 97.

⁵¹ BS, p. 71: "Kinder erziehen, Geld verdienen, Korn säen: alles das ist Spielerei, sinnlos. Aber Geige spielen, das ist gut, tut nicht weh, vergeht und verklängt. Geld kann töten, Kinder können morden, wenn sie groß sind . . . aber eine Geige kann nicht morden. Morden kann nur der Mensch."

⁵² BS, p. 104.

is still in the second novel an echo of Wiechert's one-time preoccupation with Hermann Bang and his "gray house." Indeed, gray often has disparaging connotations in this and later books. Harro's early life holds memories of the "gray, sluggish, moving water of those days."⁵³ We hear about the gray walls of a tall house with heavy portals, behind which an indifferent mother and father disappear.⁵⁴ Gray, quite un-Mephistophelian, is the color of realizing experience, as it is also the color of the prosaic everyday dress, and the self-same prosaic sobriety is then associated with loudness.⁵⁵ (Stillness, we remember, is of eternity to Wiechert.) The hermit's "silent" house lies lost in the snow "like a gray stone."⁵⁶ While the child Harro's soul remains in bondage, he is clad "in a gray blouse,"⁵⁷ staring into the "gray flood,"⁵⁸ and, once he is forced to make his way home, he is unable to raise his eyes from the "dark path,"⁵⁹ which is not merely the darkness of evening.

As Wiechert comes to his beloved Nature, however, he abandons himself to her riotous colors, for she refutes eternally his and her own somber moods and assigns him, simultaneously, to his proper place in the great scheme of the universe. It seems probable that Wiechert has learned much from Jacobsen in this respect. One might take such a scene as that which Harro looks upon in his young isolation:

Still and flaming stood autumn about the lakes. All the dark forest paths were bridges between fiery seas. White beech branches gilded the pine forest, and in a solitary clearing the red torch of the maple was burning. Only the crane was crying from a veiled blue, and the last logs went rolling down from their places . . . in blue twilight . . . and the young birches stood as sentinels, in golden armor, in front of the darkening cathedral. . . . So there fell upon Harro color and glow and call of the crane.⁶⁰

One might open at random any of Jacobsen's relatively few books, poetry or prose, and find a passage saturated with color, filled with a total surrender to the beauty of earth, yet tinged with the sadness that all this glory is doomed to fade. There is a description which comes to mind of the fragment of an autumn sunset upon a garden over which Niels Lyhne's mother looks out, while the thought that she must shortly take leave of life lies as a shadow upon her and fills her with a restless, sorrowful melancholy. Nature, quite indifferent, takes no heed, she realizes, and lavishes its splendors impartially; even from her narrow window she glimpses the glory of the whole:

The trees of the garden concealed the gold and the glow of the sunset; at one single place only a burning red spot opened up between the trunks and enabled a

⁵³ *BS*, p. 5.

⁵⁴ *BS*, p. 6.

⁵⁵ *BS*, pp. 56, 67.

⁵⁶ *BS*, p. 70.

⁵⁷ *BS*, p. 4.

⁵⁸ *Idem*.

⁵⁹ *Idem*.

⁶⁰ *BS*, p. 13.

sun of deep golden, flashing rays to awaken green colors and bronze-brown reflections on the dark mass of foliage.

Above, over the restless treetops, the clouds chased somberly across the smoky red sky and on their flight lost tatters of cloud, small, narrow ribbons of loosened cloud, which the sun's radiance then saturated with wine-red fire.⁶¹

The riot of color which Jacobsen employs he matches by a profusion of simile and metaphor. Wiechert too is steeped in imagery; but, unlike Jacobsen, his abandonment to earth's beauty is paired with his search for eternity, and the one constantly serves him as a symbol for the other. His nondogmatic, deeply religious self cannot be content with the finality of phenomena; he seeks within this earth the "living cloak of divinity" which the Earth Spirit in *Faust* is ever weaving. "I need only to ascend to this place on Sunday mornings," we hear Herr Leberecht saying, "and the divine nature inherent in all things stands at the edge of the forest and stretches out its hand to me."⁶²

As figures of speech in a novel of education and development, the inevitable doors and roads and paths punctuate the journey from the known to the unknown:

the sorrow of that spring night had opened hidden portals;⁶³
they all go through the same gate . . . of youth, of love, and of yearning;⁶⁴
many roads lead across the earth, and behind each window the loom is weaving; one must seek, Harro, but one never knows whether one will find;⁶⁵
never can a child of man find the dark portal. The door of life and the door of death stand immovable from the very beginning;⁶⁶
the portals of youth and the ultimate portal;⁶⁷
a door which opens soundlessly and the bolt is drawn behind him;⁶⁸
the wrong door;⁶⁹
the dark path as symbol of the unknown;⁷⁰
the many doors that beckon and the voices that call. . . .⁷¹

Simile and metaphor are so lavishly incorporated into the style that there is scarcely a page from which examples could not be drawn. There comes a time, indeed, in the author's life when he castigates himself for his excessive devotion to symbolism and consciously explores its dangers. In the book with which we are presently concerned, Mischa, the gypsy, is a "lame, gray, falcon";⁷²

⁶¹ *NL*, p. 117.

⁶² *BS*, p. 20.

⁶³ *BS*, p. 56.

⁶⁴ *BS*, p. 104.

⁶⁵ *BS*, p. 113.

⁶⁶ *BS*, p. 104.

⁶⁷ *BS*, pp. 83, 96.

⁶⁸ *BS*, p. 75.

⁶⁹ *BS*, p. 104: "Vielleicht sind sie alle durch ein falsches Tor gegangen, vielleicht gibt es irgendwo eine stille, dunkle Pforte, und ihr Riegel springt auf. . . ."

⁷⁰ *BS*, p. 180: "die neuen Tore an den Wegen seines Lebens"; but on p. 197: "die dunkelnde Straße in die Wälder hinein."

⁷¹ *BS*, p. 188.

⁷² *BS*, p. 3.

heavy clouds drag themselves gray through the evening;⁷³

the gray light of parting is upon the unhealthy ardor of passion at the beginning of autumn;⁷⁴

Simplizius is the quarry in the thicket; the rustling behind the windows is great and dull like lonely ships thrashing through the surging flood;⁷⁵

through the wind and the rain Harro feels as if a strangely familiar coffin were being lowered into the earth.⁷⁶

In a sustained image, Wiechert describes Harro's reunion with Maja at the concert:

Before his eyes the sepulchres of his life sprang open, as if the hinges of the lids were loosening beneath the sounds, and from the moldering depths there rose in resurrection everything that had long since died: home and youth, the peace of the village and the expansive view which Simplizius had over the declining evening.⁷⁷

Further, the frozen bed of the stream stretches out like an empty coffin;⁷⁸ the highway is like a bright bridge to the dark ocean of the forest;⁷⁹ the Milky Way is like a bridge between worlds, but it leads to other shores than those of earth;⁸⁰ the sunset glow is like an antechamber of eternity.⁸¹

Through it all we find constantly the motif of Jacobsen's tragedy, the motif of much of the nineteenth century and of neo-romanticism: "It is the great sadness that a soul is always alone";⁸²

They all lived behind bars, those who had names and the nameless. They gazed through them and stretched out hands to one another, and remained solitary in living and dying.⁸³

Echoes of synaesthesia, so dear to all romanticism, are found in conventional dress: the "burning red blush" of shame, "burning red kisses."⁸⁴ Scarlet, the color of the fairy princess,⁸⁵ fades to a "sad red"⁸⁶ in the gray winter days in which the "soul would otherwise freeze to death" if it could not wear red.⁸⁷

⁷³ BS, p. 60.

⁷⁴ BS, p. 95: "Der erste Ton des Herbstes war erklingen, und eine krankhafte Glut erfüllte die Küsse, weil das graue Licht des Scheidens über ihnen war."

⁷⁵ BS, p. 111.

⁷⁶ BS, p. 101.

⁷⁷ BS, p. 143.

⁷⁸ BS, p. 161.

⁷⁹ BS, p. 157.

⁸⁰ BS, p. 163.

⁸¹ BS, p. 161.

⁸² NL, p. 243: "Es war das große Traurige, daß eine Seele stets allein ist. Es war eine Lüge, jeder Glaube an die Verschmelzung von Seele und Seele."

⁸³ BS, p. 163: "Alle lebten sie hinter Gittern, mit Namen und namenlos. Sahen hindurch und gaben sich die Hände, und blieben einsam im Leben und im Sterben."

⁸⁴ BS, pp. 159, 92.

⁸⁵ BS, p. 15: "Sie strich ihr rotes Kleid über die Füße und begann aus Vogelbeeren einen Kranz zu flechten... 'du müßtest einen Purpurmantel tragen...' 'Ach Harro, Harro... es gibt doch keine Märchen mehr.' Und sie ließ die abgefallenen Vogelbeeren durch die Finger gleiten."

⁸⁶ BS, p. 153.

⁸⁷ BS, p. 146.

Wiechert has furnished at various times the justification for an examination of his kinship with Jacobsen.⁸⁸ In a book review written about 1930, he compares the Russian author Schmeljow with Jens Peter Jacobsen. He says he knows of no one except the latter in whom one may find such an intoxication of light, of color, and of fragrance. Wiechert asserts that both authors have the ability to show man and nature completely in accord, in a human surrender to the yearning and fulfillment of earth, so penetratingly delineated that all human destiny seems perforce nothing more or less than a beautiful, sorrowful blossom. Growing out of the fruitfulness of this earth, it partakes of happiness in the same measure as it does of decay.⁸⁹

Into the story of Harro Bruckner this East Prussian has woven the undertone of tragedy with equal incisiveness. Equally has he underlined human surrender to the yearning and fulfillment of earth, similarly has he tried to convey light, color, and fragrance.

He departs in purpose from Jacobsen, as Rilke did, when he searches for the Absolute.⁹⁰ As it was in Rilke's case, his admiration

⁸⁸ A few passages of imagery from Jacobsen's works:

SN, p. 84: "bleich wie der Haß . . ."

"diese mageren, weißen Jungfrauenseelen, die sich wie ein Flug verirrer Tauben gegen das schwarze Gitter pressen."

NL, p. 59: "Erst dann, wenn man die Tür der Entscheidung hat ins Schloß fallen hören, graben die eiskalten Klauen der Gewißheit sich einem in die Brust, um sich langsam . . . um den nervenfeinen Hoffnungsfaden in unserem Herzen zu sammeln, an dem unsere Glückswelt hängt;—der Faden wird zerschnitten—was er hielt, fällt herab—dann wird es zertreten—und durch die öde Leere dringt der scharfe Schrei der Verzweiflung."

NL, p. 69: "Draußen vor dem Fenster erröteten die weißen Blumen wie Rosen im Schein der untergehenden Sonne. Bogen über Bogen baute der Blütenflor sich zu einer Rosenburg, zu einem Chor von Rosen auf, und durch die luftigen Wölbungen schien der abendblaue Himmel herein, während goldene Lichter mit Purpurrand aus allen schwebenden Guirlanden in Glorienstrahlen hervorbrachen."

NL, p. 116: "—alles kommt zurück wie vergiftete Pfeile, die ihre Spitzen tief in deine eigene Brust senken, ihre stumpfen Spitzen, denn der Stachel brach ja ab in jenem Herzen, das nicht mehr schlägt."

NL, p. 125: "wenn gelb beleuchtete Abendnebel das ferne Juragebirge verhüllten, und der See, rot wie ein Kupferspiegel mit guldernen, vom Abendrot zackig umranderten Flammen mit dem Himmelsglanz in ein großes, strahlendes Meer der Unendlichkeit zusammenzufließen schien—dann war es zuweilen, als verstumte die Sehnsucht und als hätte die Seele das Land gefunden, das sie suchte."

⁸⁹ "Ich kenne niemanden außer Jacobsen, bei dem ein solcher Rausch des Lichtes, der Farbe, des Duftes zu finden wäre wie hier. Bei dem eine solche Auflösung des Menschen in die Natur vor sich geht, ein Hingeeben an Sehnsucht und Erfüllung der Erde. So sehr und mit so zwingender Eindringlichkeit, daß alles Menschenschicksal nichts weiter zu sein scheint als eine schöne und traurige Blüte, die aus der Fruchtbarkeit dieser Erde emporwächst, der Glückseligkeit so teilhaftig wie des Welkens. Und ich glaube nichts Besseres . . . sagen zu können, als daß sie . . . an das Goethewort erinnert, daß nichts Größeres uns geschehen könne, als daß sich Gott-Natur uns offenbare." *Die Literatur*, Vol. 33 (October, 1930-September, 1931), p. 351.

⁹⁰ Cf. also *BS*, p. 186: "Das Letzte suchst du, das nur der Tod geben kann, Gott willst du in dich fassen. . . Und das, Harro, kann ich nicht geben. Niemand wird es dir geben, keine Frau. Aber dein Fluch ist es, daß du nicht aufhören kannst zu suchen. . ."

for Jacobsen's art and the tragic life of the latter exist side by side with his deeper quest for God. The impact of Rilke upon Wiechert's thought is discernible in the period of the *Blaue Schwingen* and the two following novels, when obviously Rilke's thoughts and verse had deep application to his own problems. His constant reiteration that there is no virtue in cities is due to a more primary experience of nature and isolation than Rilke ever had. Harro's friend Gerhard, who says that he would not like to live in a city, where everything is so dark and mournful, but always "in an old house, where people step softly [*leise*],"⁹¹ raises one voice for the author, while the flight of Simplizius from men and affairs is an extended implementation of this dislike. There is a passage in which Simplizius replies to Harro's questions in imagery similar to Rilke's:

WIECHERT

Wir graben und graben
in dunklen Schächten,
mit keuchender Brust
und blutenden Händen,
um das Rätsel des Lebens
zu lösen. [line arrangement
my own]

RILKE

In tiefen Nächten grab ich dich, du Schatz.
.
.
.
Oh, du bist einsam. Du bist Einsamkeit,
.
.
.
Und meine Hände, welche blutig sind
vom Graben, heb ich offen in den Wind⁹²

The *Blaue Schwingen* begins the long and unbroken praise of stillness, as it attaches to the countenance of that which is eternal, and as it is emphasized by the adjective "*leise*" which Rilke likes so much to use. Evening and sunset become increasingly symbolic of the passing of the years and the foretaste of the permanence which shall endure.

Herr Leberecht is the living symbol of Wiechert's ideal old age; he typifies the true teacher, who, as an "unsuccessful" idealist, has been relegated to the provinces. He has always been a little afraid of life; in his old age he raises flowers and fruit, immerses himself in the comforting mysteries of Meister Ekkehard, and is content with the possession of a bench from which he can look upon the forests and the sunset. His part in Harro's education is directed toward that final search for ultimates, and his own views deeply impress the boy: "Only stillness is sacred. And that is why death is so moving. Death is a return."⁹³ Death is not a tragedy to him; it is just a part of life, a completion of the cycle.

In the same period of the book review linking the Russian author with Jacobsen in their immeasurable harmony with our earth of splendor and of sorrow, Wiechert testified to his deep agreement with the essential aspects of Rilke's travail about God. He expressed his firm conviction that the roots of poetry must lie in the religious essence

⁹¹ *BS*, p. 66.

⁹² *BS*, p. 84. Rilke, *Ges. Werke*, II (Insel, 1930), 265.

⁹³ *BS*, p. 175.

of the poet, whose faith must somehow penetrate to the outer form of his inner beliefs:

God has many garments, as there are many mansions in his realm. . . . For the poet of the Psalms he was the Known and for Nietzsche he was the Unknown. Goethe would not name Him, for Dostojewski he was the "White Savior," and for Rilke he was the Dark One. . . . But for all of them he was the dark, cool earth into which they sank their roots.⁹⁴

A close examination of this second novel leads to the conclusion that it has all the potentialities of the later Wiechert, and that the two which preceded it in publication⁹⁵ may be regarded more as a deviation from his natural line of development. Its repetitiousness in the matter of the theme "müde"⁹⁶ may surely be ascribed in part to the fact that this is a war document of a sort, and to that extent a tragedy of a specific nature. With all its faults of composition and over-emphasis, deeply drenched in sentiment as it is, and with its obvious "Stimmungskunst," its sincerity is impressive, and the values it stresses are still valid at the end of Wiechert's life, as they were in the days when it was written. This is not mere art for art's sake; it is an art worth examining in its beginnings because it is a step of real moment, a rung in the ladder of artistic and ethical maturity which drew the attention and admiration of wide circles in troubled times.

If, to be sure, this is a war-inspired book in a limited way, and tragic insofar as all war is tragic, yet the underlying tragedy which is Wiechert's greatest suffering has nothing to do with the myriads of deaths in the wake of the war. Neither is it any particular death, for the author is learning to accept the fact that death is incidental to the humanness from which none can escape; like Rilke, he is trying to incorporate death into the wholeness of life and see it, in its best manifestations, as a completion of man's cycle, as it is of nature's cycle, with potential fresh beginnings. But the pain and sorrow of being alive in all our frailty and error, our capacity to see perfection and never to realize it, our wastefulness and destructiveness, constitute the never-ending tragedy of all humanity.

The great tragedy of the *Blaue Schwingen* lies in the realization that our earth is so beautiful, while man is born to suffer, to err, and to die. This is Jacobsen's deepest sorrow, and his characters often

⁹⁴ From "Dichtung und Glaube," *Die Literatur*, Vol. 33, p. 609.

⁹⁵ The association with Rilke receives a desperate emphasis in the *Totenwolf* (published 1922), which is prefaced by one of the stanzas from the *Stundenbuch*, in which the imaginary monk cries out his isolation and mortal pain.

⁹⁶ As a child he suffers from "tote Müdigkeit in Herzen" (*BS*, p. 4) and there is talk of "müdem Wind" (p. 12). Even in Ella's bedroom, at the age of twenty-one, he sits "die Arme müde herabhängend" (p. 140). Ten years later, at the end of a concert, he sees through the haze "die müden Gesichter, die nach Schlaf und Schweigen verlangten, wie er selbst" (p. 141). The applause is still thundering. . . . At the height of his career he asks: "Bin ich denn schon so alt und müde? Oder habe ich auch nur falsch gelebt? Hunger, Liebe, Ruhm, ist es nicht alles so einfach? Ich habe es gehabt und bin doch müde?" (p. 155).

serve him as a mouthpiece.⁹⁷ In dying, they contrast the richness of living with the poverty of dying. Not so Wiechert: now he begins to emphasize the comfort which Mother Earth bestows even when life is closing. Simplizius, in biblical paraphrase, predicts that Harro will one day find consolation when all else has forsaken him and She takes him up:

You too will return from life's festivals, tired your wings, dusty your garment. . . . And it will be well with you if you will sit in the evening light before the tabernacles [*Hütten*] of home and see beyond the treetops, where the fires of evening are expiring over the merciful night. . . . For our parents die, and our children forsake us, but Mother Earth does not allow us to let go her hand.⁹⁸

As we leave Harro, we see how the tragedy of beauty has seized him. Deeply rooted in his beloved landscape of water, reeds, heath, forest, the herons' isle, with the wailing cry of the falcon in his ears, and an inner vision of the forest solitude through the changing seasons, he is suffused with the pain and the beauty of the world. It accentuates the poignancy of grief that lies in his voluntary exile, which—again in biblical terms as so often—is “like going into the desert,” and from his country and kindred into a foreign land (with the dual connotation of the word “*Elend*”).⁹⁹ Hands propped on bridge railing, looking upstream, his last words are addressed to this beauty: “You beautiful world . . . you beautiful, sad world. . . .”¹⁰⁰

Ernst Wiechert's *Blau Schwingen* is thus a logical second step in the development of his humanistic art. It is the biography of an artist-individualist who attains full stature in performance because he has the most precious gift: the soul which guides the bow.¹⁰¹ It is filled with all the melancholy of the author's heritage, with his passion for the earth, with his sadness because beauty is so fragile. No other novel is so directly a tribute to his admiration for Jens Peter Jacobsen, in its unending “*Sehnsucht*” and its allegiance to dreams and dreamers. It is surcharged with fatigue and discouragement, but it is not merely negative. The next step may be rebellion; the seeker may find himself in a morass of despair. But his questions are unending: may he be passive or must he be active? Has he some right to happiness, or must it be all suffering? How can he endure the isolation and loneliness that are the essence of life, and treasure the solitude that are indispensable to his art? What shall be the keynote of his “*Suchen*,” God or man? So the defeat and the despair that permeate the book

⁹⁷ Cf. *SN*, pp. 126 ff.: “Wer sterben muß, liebe Kinder, ist so arm; ich bin so arm, denn diese ganze wunderschöne Welt, die nun so viele Jahre mein reiches, gesegnetes Heim gewesen, sie soll von mir genommen werden . . . und ich werde meinen Fuß nie wieder hierher setzen.”

⁹⁸ *BS*, p. 105.

⁹⁹ *BS*, p. 197: “und seine Augen hingen an der staubigen Erde, als gehe er aus seinem Vaterlande in das Elend.”

¹⁰⁰ *Idem*.

¹⁰¹ *BS*, p. 94: “Du hast das Kostbarste, was ein Künstler haben kann, die Seele, die den Bogen lenkt, und deine Saiten klingen, als seien sie über die Brunnen der Tiefe gespannt.”

are not the final answer, as the values of fame and honor, of wealth and recognition were not lasting satisfactions. The wealth of childhood memories is, on the other hand, an enduring possession upon which a valuable life may still be built.

Impressionistic in style, with lyric inserts in the romantic manner, the book is autobiographical in a highly stylized way. Ernst Wiechert is Harro Bruckner, Simplizius, Uncle Felix, Leberecht Ruhoff; he is the poet at the age of thirty, he is the soldier who had looked upon the horrors of destruction, he is the tired human being who had suffered tragedies of home and country. He is the philosopher looking upon the face of the eternal, the religious man contemplating the untold manifestations of God; he is natural man examining the contradictions that make up his existence. Thus the *Blaue Schwingen* goes far beyond impressionistic relativism; it has the romantic fervor of religious essence, with its far-reaching symbolism, creative dreaming, and unending longing for the infinite.

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A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CRITICAL ARTHURIAN LITERATURE FOR THE YEAR 1948

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AJP</i>	American Journal of Philology
<i>Am. Lit.</i>	American Literature
<i>BBCS</i>	Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies
<i>Beiträge</i>	Beiträge zur geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur
<i>Comp. Lit.</i>	Comparative Literature
<i>Cym. Trans.</i>	Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion
<i>E & Ger. St.</i>	English and Germanic Studies
<i>EHR</i>	English Historical Review
<i>Et. Celt.</i>	Etudes Celtiques
<i>Ger. Rev.</i>	Germanic Review
<i>GQ</i>	German Quarterly
<i>Hisp. Rev.</i>	Hispanic Review
<i>JEGP</i>	Journal of English and Germanic Philology
<i>Leu. Bij.</i>	Leuvense Bijdragen
<i>LTLS</i>	London Times Literary Supplement
<i>MA</i>	Moyen Age
<i>MLJ</i>	Modern Language Journal
<i>MLN</i>	Modern Language Notes
<i>MLQ</i>	Modern Language Quarterly
<i>MLR</i>	Modern Language Review
<i>MP</i>	Modern Philology
<i>N&Q</i>	Notes and Queries
<i>Neophil.</i>	Neophilologus
<i>Neuphil. Mit.</i>	Neuphilologische Mitteilungen
<i>Niederden. Mit.</i>	Niederdeutsche Mitteilungen
<i>PMLA</i>	Publications of the Modern Language Association of America
<i>RES</i>	Review of English Studies
<i>Rev. belge</i>	Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire
<i>RHLF</i>	Revue d'histoire littéraire de France
<i>RLC</i>	Revue de littérature comparée
<i>RLM</i>	Revista di letteratura moderna
<i>Rom.</i>	Romania
<i>Rom. Phil.</i>	Romance Philology
<i>RR</i>	Romanic Review
<i>RS</i>	Revue de Synthèse
<i>Studia Neophil.</i>	Studia Neophilologica
<i>YWES</i>	The Year's Work in English Studies

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REVIEWS

Paul Bourget and the Nouvelle. Par WALTER T. SECOR. New York: King's Crown Press, Columbia University, 1948. Pp. xi + 256. \$3.00.

L'auteur nous rappelle que le nom de Paul Bourget n'est pas associé à la nouvelle et on lui sait gré de nous apprendre que pourtant le célèbre romancier en a écrit vingt six volumes. A tout prendre il a réussi à convaincre le lecteur du mérite de ces livres plutôt oubliés et donc l'essentiel est atteint.

Cela dit il convient d'ajouter que le plan manque de rigueur et qu'ainsi l'ouvrage se lit avec une difficulté due, non pas tant semble-t-il, au sujet qu'à la présentation au cours de laquelle l'auteur s'est efforcé de suivre la chronologie. Ce facteur conjugué avec le fait que l'auteur donne des listes très complètes aboutit au résultat que l'impression finale est celle d'un répertoire plutôt que d'un livre. Le dernier chapitre s'intitule comiquement "enfin!" et il est probable que plus d'un lecteur poussera le même soupir que l'auteur et avec le même sentiment.

Les deux premiers chapitres intitulés *Philosophy of the Nouvelle* offrent un exemple de cette exposition défectueuse. Pourquoi déranger la philosophie puisque le premier a trait à la position de Bourget dans l'histoire de la nouvelle, une question d'histoire littéraire, et que le second a pour sous-titre *Aesthetic Theories and Technical Practices?* Le simple titre classique: *L'Art de la nouvelle* n'aurait-il pas tout dit?

Par contre ce premier chapitre est largement traité et donne comme toile de fond l'évolution du genre en Italie, en Allemagne et en Angleterre. L'auteur donne aussi une bonne étude de l'amitié d'Henri James et de Paul Bourget et de la ressemblance qui se remarque entre les deux écrivains: tous deux s'intéressèrent particulièrement aux femmes de la haute société et à l'analyse psychologique.

Le troisième chapitre paraît d'une importance particulière. Il est intitulé *Genesis* et retrace le passage de Bourget du positivisme à la spiritualité catholique. Secor fait observer que, si l'art de la nouvelle ne comporte pas de conclusion morale, Bourget pourtant suggère de plus en plus, au cours de son évolution, des réflexions de cet ordre.

Il est permis de trouver qu'un genre où il doit entrer autant d'art que dans la nouvelle exige une autre étude, malgré les mérites de celle-ci, où les idées principales soient mieux mises en valeur.

JEAN DAVID

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Vilano al viento: Poemas. By ENRIQUE GONZALEZ MARTINEZ. Editorial Stylo, Mexico, 1948. Pp. 229. 5 pesos.

Vilano al viento is the latest volume of verse by one of Mexico's most illustrious men of letters. In half a century of writing, Enrique González Martínez, who might well be called the dean of contemporary Mexican poets, has made a solid and distinguished contribution to literature.

The man who banished the aristocratic swan of the modernists realized that living in an ivory tower was not an intelligent solution to the problems of life. González Martínez sought not to escape, but to understand man and nature and

the universe. As a more appropriate symbol he chose the commonplace owl, and, guided by its vision and wisdom, the poet set out in the night to interpret the mysteries of the human mind and the human heart. His many admirable volumes of poetry reveal the results of his quest and indicate a personal philosophy of optimism, courage, and dignity.

Vilano al viento reflects the mature vision of a man who at the age of seventy-seven examines life, more in retrospect than in prospect. The fifty poems in this volume, written between 1945 and 1948, are highly personal and evocative. Here, as in his earlier work, González Martínez attempts to interpret and evaluate human suffering, and he again voices his doubt about the destiny of man. But his themes are now less varied. The most striking note in this volume is the poet's ever-increasing preoccupation with death. The subject has concerned him always in his writing, but these latest verses bring into sharp focus the realization that death may be near for him.

In several poems ("Aparición," "El impaciente," "Invitación a la muerte," "La espera") he foresees death and awaits it calmly, even impatiently; in others ("Ultimo mar," "Luz en la sombra," "¿Y el morir?") he expresses fear and the feeling that death may bring new anxiety; still others reflect a realistic resignation to the sadness of leaving a full life. As he faces death, then, it is only natural that he should turn to the past. Many of the poems in this collection are nostalgic reminiscences of days long past as he evokes memories of "tiempo ido y nunca recobrado," "sol de antaño," and "voces de otrora." Before him in review pass joys, triumphs, dreams, suffering, and disillusionment. Again and again he refers to "la angustia humana" and "la sangrienta herida." Now he longs more fervently than ever to disperse the mist that conceals the mystery of life and holds the answer to man's uncertainties. "El mensaje incompleto," one of his most beautifully written poems, expresses his keen disappointment in not being able to leave to humanity one last message of hope and comfort. Another excellent poem, "El anhelo insaciable," shows him the ever-aspiring poet, striving to attain new heights.

The poetry of Enrique González Martínez is wholly charming because of its clarity and simplicity. And perhaps those very characteristics account for its vigor, rich rhythm, and delightful musical quality. The poet uses the classical forms of versification with only an occasional deviation from the traditional. The poet has a message—and he expresses it effectively.

This volume adds another note of distinction to the work of a poet who has an intensely human philosophy and a poignant comprehension of man's emotional turmoil.

BERNICE UDICK

University of Colorado

Shakespeare's "Histories": Mirrors of Elizabethan Policy. By LILY B. CAMPBELL. San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1947. Pp. xi + 346. \$6.75.

Miss Campbell's study of Shakespeare's history plays is a logical sequel to her editions of *The Mirror for Magistrates*, a work which is primarily concerned with past historical events as *exempla* for the guidance of contemporary rulers. When we recall that Sackville and Norton's *Gorboduc* was written with a similar purpose, we recognize a tradition which sees the present mirrored in

the past; and to this tradition Miss Campbell insists that Shakespeare's "histories" belong.

The term "histories" as applied to Shakespeare's plays was first used by Heming and Condell in the First Folio Edition of 1623. Yet the group so classified does not include all plays based upon history, or even all those based upon British history. In addition to the Roman plays, *Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Cymbeline* are excluded from the group, though these last are based upon the same chronicles from which the "histories" were drawn. Miss Campbell explains the distinction as one of purpose. Illustrating from Spenser's Letter to Raleigh prefixed to *The Faerie Queene*, she notes the Aristotelian division into moral virtues and political virtues. Where a play is primarily concerned with man as an individual, it presents a moral or ethical problem and is classed as a "tragedy." Where it is primarily concerned with man as the head of a state, it presents a political problem and is classed as a "history." Since history tends to move in cycles, repeating itself with surprising regularity (as explicitly stated in Raleigh's introduction to his *History of the World*), a view of past events will assist one in interpreting the present and in foreseeing future problems. Miss Campbell shows that, in some instances in which Shakespeare's plays depart from the historical facts related in his sources, the variations make the plays more nearly parallel to contemporary situations under Elizabeth.

Miss Campbell has wisely limited her subject to what she can most easily prove, though one must regret her omission of *Henry VI* and *Henry VIII*. The three parts of *Henry VI* are almost essential to an understanding of their sequel, *Richard III*; and, while Miss Campbell has promised us a separate study of them at a later date, their inclusion here might well have made her discussion of *Richard III* more effective than it is. *Henry VIII* is omitted because of doubts as to its authorship.

It is necessary to correct a possible misapprehension that may arise from the limitations which Miss Campbell has assigned herself. The fact that Shakespeare's "tragedies" are not primarily concerned with political questions does not mean that the political element is absent from them. It is clearly present in *Hamlet*, *Lear*, *Macbeth*, and, among the comedies, *Measure for Measure*. In fact, Professor E. M. W. Tillyard, in his recent *Shakespeare's History Plays*, feels constrained to include a discussion of *Macbeth* as the culmination of Shakespeare's political studies.

Professor Tillyard and Miss Campbell, working independently on Elizabethan historical theory, have evolved explanations which correspond in many respects; but, in their treatments of the separate plays, where Tillyard carefully avoids "elaborate contemporary analogies," Miss Campbell plunges wholeheartedly into the dangerous subject and in most instances proves her point. This is a major achievement which is accomplished by showing that the Elizabethans drew such analogies themselves. A modern reader may not see much likeness between Elizabeth and Richard II, but when we read contemporary tracts and pamphlets which constantly adduce the example of Richard II as a precedent for forcing Elizabeth's abdication, when we know that she herself exclaimed ironically, "I am Richard II, know ye not that?" it is difficult to see how Shakespeare could have avoided a contemporary parallel, even had he wished to do so. In the minds of his audience, the parallel was already there.

We should point out, however, that usually such parallels in Shakespeare's plays are of problems and situations rather than of persons. In her capacity as sovereign of England, Elizabeth faced problems like those of her predecessors

in many respects. Miss Campbell has shown that in current thinking King John typified the conflict with the Roman Church, Richard II the question of royal abdication, Henry IV the dangers of rebellion, Henry V the justice or injustice of war, Richard III the evil of unrestrained personal ambition. These interpretations largely resulted from the *Chronicle* of Edward Halle, some of whose chapter headings Miss Campbell adopts as her own. But from these general themes one must particularize with care. We are not to suppose, for instance, that Shakespeare considered Leicester a traitor and a murderer because Leicester's enemies had compared him with Richard III; rather, their use of such a comparison shows the Elizabethan awareness of the past as a mirror of present problems, and such an awareness would affect both Shakespeare's writing of the plays and his audience's reaction to them.

So much as this Miss Campbell has incontestably proved and has thereby established her major thesis. Her detailed comments on minor points are generally sound but not always so. The parallel between Prince Arthur, John's nephew, and Mary Stuart as rivals of their sovereigns is less convincing than she seems to think. She develops almost a grudge against Henry V for not being democratic "in the modern sense." Why should he be, since democracy was neither a Plantagenet nor a Tudor ideal? Judged by the standards of his own age, he was surprisingly democratic.

These deficiencies, however, are very small flies in the ointment. Miss Campbell has given us the most significant commentary upon Shakespeare's history plays that has yet been published. It adds greatly to our understanding of the plays and of the period in which they were written.

JOHN E. HANKINS

University of Kansas

This Great Stage: Image and Structure in King Lear. By ROBERT BECHTOLD HEILMAN. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1948. Pp. xi + 339. \$3.50.

The modern study of Shakespeare's imagery provides us with interesting evidence of how fashions in criticism arise. For generations poets wrote imagist poetry which compelled critics to study the function of the image in contemporary poetry. Having convinced themselves that the image was all important, it was natural that they should apply their newly formed principles to earlier poetry. And so from Miss Spurgeon onwards we have had a succession of work on Shakespeare's imagery. In this succession Professor Heilman's book takes an honorable place.

Professor Heilman deals with the image as structure, that is to say, he shows how *Lear* is constructed of images arranged in ordered sequence, interrelated, and developed to a climax in which they are all brought together. He discusses each series separately and in great detail, as, for instance, the images relating to sight and its opposite blindness. These two qualities can be physical or spiritual, sight or insight, and Professor Heilman shows with what incredible subtlety and with what inexhaustible fertility Shakespeare elaborates these ideas, displaying them in innumerable combinations and permutations, but always keeping a firm hand on the development until he has reached his final revelation. It is the same with images of smell, clothes, disease, animals, sex, nature, justice. In IV, vi "we find, united in a single impact, the sight, smell, clothes, sex, animal, and

justice themes that move throughout the play. And they are organized by means of the madness theme. . . . In his [Lear's] madness there is unity" (p. 199). Space, of course, makes it impossible to pick such a close-knit argument to pieces in order to prove its quality. It is enough to say that Professor Heilman shows the logic, the developing process, the organic nature of Shakespeare's imagery. It is necessary, however, to point out that the implications of Professor Heilman's method are important for criticism. Imagery for him goes hand in hand with character and meaning. He makes it clear that they are progressively revealed through the image. Professor Heilman is gloriously right, but he lays himself open to criticism from the "modern" school. I can imagine some critics saying that he is too one-sided in that he does not treat *Lear* as a play written for the stage nor show why it may be a success in the theater. But a good case can be made out for Professor Heilman. He shows that his apparently bewildering labyrinth of images is not really bewildering; that on the contrary it has a clear logical structure and a unifying meaning. That is as much as a work on imagery can do.

Professor Heilman's book will certainly stimulate scholars to further study of imagery in Shakespeare. It is important in many ways, not only for the wealth of information it provides, but also as strengthening the school of critics who see in Shakespeare's work both character and meaning.

HEREWARD T. PRICE

University of Michigan

Henry Vaughan: A Life and Interpretation. By F. E. HUTCHINSON. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1947. Pp. viii + 260. \$5.50.

Most of the material for this book was collected over the past half-century by Miss Gwenllian Morgan and Miss Louise Guiney, both of whom died before any of it was ready for printing. Dr. Hutchinson has added his researches to theirs and has produced the definitive biography of Henry Vaughan. Other Vaughan scholarship, English and American, is laid under contribution and acknowledged. In addition to a scrupulously documented account of Vaughan's publications, lawsuits, and private life, Dr. Hutchinson offers the most extensive commentary available on the prose treatises, *Olor Iscanus*, *Silex Scintillans*, and *Thalia Rediviva*. Appendixes on Vaughan's ancestry, birth, and descendants, together with a set of genealogies, complete the volume.

Although some questions remain unanswerable, such as when and where Vaughan got his medical education, Dr. Hutchinson's conclusions about his military service and the dates of his marriages are persuasive. Close analysis of the war poems in *Olor Iscanus* enables the biographer to conclude, with E. L. Marilla, that Vaughan saw military service as a royalist in 1645. Personal references in the *Poems* volume of 1646 are interpreted to suggest that Vaughan married Catherine Wise before that date. And from the age of his youngest child, a son ordained in 1687, it seems probable that Vaughan married Catherine's sister Elizabeth before 1655. In the chapters on Vaughan at Oxford and on his conversion, every scrap of evidence is similarly analyzed, as likewise in the treatment of his discipleship to Herbert, his long study of the Christian mystical writings, and the uneven quality of *Thalia Rediviva*. As author of the definitive edition of Herbert, Dr. Hutchinson has been able to support very strongly his claim of Herbert's extensive influence on Vaughan's thought and art.

This volume might well stand as a biography of the Vaughan family, for it includes much information about Thomas the father, Denise the mother, Thomas the twin, and William the younger brother. The opening chapters on the Vaughans of Tretower are to the point here, as is the chapter on Thomas and occult philosophy, which throws much light on Henry's poetizing of Hermetic ideas. Dr. Hutchinson's account of the lawsuits and family quarrels brought on by Thomas and Catherine, who darkened the close of their father's life, takes the Silurist far beyond his last poems.

The reader is impressed throughout this study by the author's constant exercise of the poems as commentary upon the strictly established facts of his subject's life. The result is a book both authoritative as biography and convincing as interpretation.

KESTER SVENDSEN

University of Oklahoma

Shelley and the Thought of His Time: A Study in the History of Ideas. By JOSEPH BARRELL. New Haven: Yale University Studies in English, Volume 106; London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, 1947. Pp. ix + 210. \$3.00.

Dr. Barrell has given us a brilliant analysis of Shelley's philosophy as it is related to the thought currents of Europe since the Middle Ages. He has amply demonstrated the necessity of a wide and connected view of history and of philosophical developments if Shelley or any other writer is to be understood properly. Fortunately, Dr. Barrell is well equipped for the task which he undertakes; besides the requisite knowledge of Shelley and of philosophy, he has the ability to organize his materials and to express himself with clarity and ease.

The thesis of the book is that Shelley the idealist sought throughout his life for a unified view of the universe, for a unity which would account for the one and the many, the existence of good and evil, and for freedom and necessity. Beginning in *Queen Mab* as a disciple of Godwin's philosophy of *Political Justice*, Shelley exhibited the same irreconcilable conflict between necessity and freedom which Godwin himself unconsciously exhibited. The *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* and *Mont Blanc* of 1816 are important stages in Shelley's progress from materialism to idealism, but it was Plato who furnished Shelley with the intellectual basis for reconciling good and evil, necessity and freedom. The fullest measure of Plato's influence is found in *Prometheus Unbound*, but this influence continues through *Adonais*, *Epipsychidion*, *Hellas*, and *The Triumph of Life*. At no time, however, was Shelley a pure Platonist, for in *Prometheus Unbound* itself Shelley shows (in Act IV) his tendency to go beyond the intellectualism of Plato to the more purely emotional and subjective view that there is no reality besides the reality of thought. All later poems manifest a progressive tendency in this direction. Shelley never took the Platonic or any other philosophy without qualification; in fact, he worked out his philosophy independently, and arrived at the same general conclusions as did the German Romanticists, with whom he had a closer relationship in spirit than with the writers of his own country.

On the whole Dr. Barrell persuades us that his conclusions are sound. His exposition of eighteenth-century philosophy and of Godwin's doctrines is excellent. It is good, too, to have an authoritative denial that Shelley's thought around

1815 was Berkeleyan (pp. 124-29), though Mary Shelley herself has said that it was. Still more important is the emphatic statement that the *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* is in no way Platonic, but Wordsworthian. This agrees in general with my own recently published views on the subject ("Shelley's *On Life*," *PMLA*, LXII [1947], 774-83).

I cannot, however, accept at its full value Dr. Barrell's most important contention that Plato alone afforded Shelley (in 1818) the philosophical unity which he had long sought. The definite turn in Shelley's philosophy had occurred long before 1818 and long before Shelley's acquaintance with Plato was direct and intimate. The fault in emphasis is, possibly, the result of a misunderstanding of the importance of Shelley's renewed study of Wordsworth in 1815-1816, and of the significance and connection of his prose works: *A Refutation of Deism*, *On Life*, and the *Essay on Christianity*. It is also my opinion that the analysis of *Epipsychidion* is inadequate, partly because of Dr. Barrell's neglect of the prose fragment *On Love*. Moreover, my own studies lead me to disagree with Dr. Barrell's contention (p. 187) that though "Berkeley, and even the German idealists, all stem from Locke," Shelley did not. From *Queen Mab* to *The Triumph of Life* Shelley never departed from the fundamental principle of Locke that all knowledge is derived through the senses. Whatever other intellectual elements Shelley might introduce, this concept did not change.

Dr. Barrell has made a valuable and readable study of Shelley. If it is faulty in some particulars, it is fundamentally sound and is decidedly a contribution both to Shelley scholarship and to the history of ideas.

FREDERICK L. JONES

University of Pennsylvania

On a Darkling Plain: The Art and Thought of Thomas Hardy. By HARVEY CURTIS WEBSTER. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947. Pp. x + 240. \$3.50.

For more than sixty years (i.e., ever since Von Hartmann's *Philosophy of the Unconscious* first appeared in English) Thomas Hardy's readers have enjoyed quarrying philosophical rocks from his novels and poems, and with them building articles, dissertations, and entire books of their own. All these previous studies of Hardy's philosophy are now superseded by the present work, which excels both in the soundness of its analysis of Hardy's thought and in the correctness of its appreciation of his art. Professor Webster knows his Hardy; but what is more, he knows Hardy's background as well. Unlike so many who have written on Hardy's philosophy, or on what they announce as Hardy's philosophy, Professor Webster has read the *Dorset County Chronicle*, as well as *Blackwood's* and the *British Quarterly*; he knows the *Edinburgh*, the *Quarterly*, and the *Westminster* reviews. From this reading he has emerged with a well-charted familiarity with Hardy's epoch, which enables him to see through the spurious qualifications of various guides who have previously offered their services in the philosophical Hardy Country: "it is not true, as Mme de Ridder-Barzin declares . . . , nor is it legitimate to find with Mlle Cazamian . . . , "Those critics are mistaken who . . . , "Rutland . . . is mistaken . . . , "It seems to me that d'Exideuil's claim is unjustified . . . " (pp. 13, 157, 159, 223). Webster walks his darkling plain with assured step.

This does not mean that he finds a hitherto undiscovered philosophical system in Hardy's writings. On the contrary, Webster may disappoint some system-loving readers by the very absence of any such discovery—by his insistence that Hardy told the truth when he disclaimed any intention of presenting, in his writings, any consistently held philosophical position. To quote Professor Webster: "While a formal philosopher cannot be both a pessimist and a meliorist, the artist is likely to be both at different times . . ."; "There is not a single novel in which Hardy is consistently a fatalist, a determinist, an optimist, or a pessimist . . ."; "In his interpretation of the significance to man of the action of the universe, Hardy approaches most nearly the position of the meliorist" (pp. 63, 134, 135).

One of the best services that Mr. Webster renders is his destruction of the myth that Hardy was born a gloomy pessimist. He gives a convincing analysis of Hardy's youth, and finds in it a cheerfulness, a hope and ambition, an idealism, and a religious devotion, to which many a reader has been blind, especially if he has been brought up on the formula that Hardy was a melancholy fatalist.

Professor Webster skates on thinner ice when he traces Hardy's temperament and experience beyond the age at which he began to write his novels. Hardy "cared little for the accumulation of money" (p. 83). Those who knew him thought otherwise. "He had been singularly fortunate in his marriage" (p. 85). Had he? Well-informed persons disagree. "Hardy was appalled by the constant going-out into society demanded of the novelist" (p. 86). His correspondence does not support this statement. "Hardy quotes Browning . . . but there is no question of any influence" (p. 229). I wonder. Strange that he should wish to hear "Rabbi Ben Ezra" read to him on his death-bed. Space prevents a discussion of this point here.

On a few minor matters Mr. Webster is open to correction. What he calls "a periodical" (p. 3) is really a book by C. H. Gifford: *A History of the Wars Occasioned by the French Revolution* (London, 1817; originally published in parts). The "excursion to Oxford" (p. 83) was really a visit to Bath, and the "newspaper shop" (p. 83) was neither at Oxford nor at Bath but at Clifton (i.e., Bristol). "Hardy . . . gave up Sophocles and Aeschylus . . ." (p. 223). True, he gave up trying to read them in *Greek*, but he was far from giving up his interest in them. On the contrary, he later on invested his architectural prize-money in still-extant copies of the Greek dramatists in *English*, and they remained in his library until his death. Long after the date when, according to Mr. Webster, Hardy had given up Aeschylus, the novelist was lifting a famous phrase out of Theodore A. Buckley's 1849 translation of *Prometheus Bound*, to use as a last-minute insertion on the last page of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.

These are, however, small specks on the surface of Professor Webster's work. He has constructed a well-marked and serviceable highway which will greatly aid all future travelers over this philosophical plain.

CARL J. WEBER

Colby College

Longfellow and Scandinavia: A Study of the Poet's Relationship with the Northern Languages and Literature. By ANDREW HILEN. New Haven: Yale University Studies in English, Volume 107, 1947. Pp. vii + 190. \$3.00.

Longfellow and Scandinavia is a compact, scholarly book which provides a clear picture of the professor-poet's travels in Sweden and Denmark, and evaluates his knowledge and use of the Scandinavian languages and literatures. On finishing the book, the reader has the feeling that he is thoroughly and reliably informed on the subject. Much of the material is drawn from manuscript sources. Dr. Hilen had access to the letters, journals, notebooks, and other manuscript materials at the Longfellow House, and he has searched through them with admirable care and fairness of judgment. Some of the facts, of course, have been dealt with by earlier scholars. Every biographer of the poet has included an account of Longfellow's journey to Scandinavia, and a number of scholars have treated special phases of his relationship with the culture and the people. Dr. Hilen has reviewed the known facts, made corrections, and added many and more accurate details. His book will probably be valued principally for its completeness and accuracy.

Longfellow's interest in Scandinavia was aroused by reading Scott and Gray. He later met in Rome a young Swedish poet, Nicander. Seven years afterward, Longfellow went to Sweden hoping to cultivate further this literary friendship and have a sympathetic guide through the country and its literature. But Nicander had left Stockholm, and the two young men never saw each other again. Longfellow had to revise his plans, lose valuable time, and struggle against disappointment. In later years he "cultivated his relationship with Sweden more as a hobby than as a vital, intellectual interest." When he wrote the opening lines of *Evangeline*, however, he pictured Grand-Pré in a Swedish landscape, which he had described in his journal in Scandinavia ten years before:

Almost primeval simplicity reigns over this Northern land—almost primeval solitude and stillness. . . . Around you are forests of fir. Overhead hang the long, fan-like branches, trailing with moss, and heavy with red and blue cones.

This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlocks,
Bearded with moss, and in garments green, indistinct in the twilight,
Stand like Druids of eld, with voices sad and prophetic. . . .

Geographers and realists may cavil at the incorrectness of Longfellow's description. It was foreign, however, and with the romantic readers of yesterday, Longfellow's journey to Sweden paid beautifully. By translating some of the works of Tegnér, Longfellow got valuable practice in writing hexameters which were used in *Evangeline* and the *Courtship of Miles Standish*. Tegnér also influenced the character of Longfellow's romanticism, and "In the final analysis, therefore, the Swedish bishop must be accepted as one of the most important personalities contributing to Longfellow's development as a poet."

Longfellow fared better in Denmark, and, although he disliked the "burr" in Danish speech, he soon preferred Danish literature, in general, to Swedish literature. At the end of his two weeks' stay in Copenhagen, his "grasp of the Danish language was surprisingly firm," and he was invited to join the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries. Thirty-eight years later he translated a Danish ballad as the Musician's third tale in *Tales of a Wayside Inn*. "The excellence of the version, reflecting an accurate understanding of a difficult idiom, is a tribute to Longfellow's keen retention of the language." Two original poems are

of Danish inspiration. He received many Danish visitors, and had letters from Danes in all walks of life, with the result that his "intimacy with Danish culture was cemented not only by his own efforts but by the enthusiasms of admirers as well."

Longfellow's "relationship with Icelandic literature emphasizes primarily the poet's major weakness: he lacked the strength and discipline to rise above the sentimentality of his romanticism." In the Eddas and the *Heimskringla*, he admired and tried to cultivate the power of expression "with which he was not inherently gifted." He had only a dictionary knowledge of the language, but "simply substituted his imagination for scholarship and evolved . . . his own world of skaldic minstrelsy and viking heroism." The influence of Icelandic literature on Longfellow is impressive, viewed in its entirety, and far out of proportion to his knowledge of the language.

This monograph was first written as a doctoral dissertation at Yale University, and later revised for publication. Perhaps some of the detracting features derive from the earlier form of the work. The language is at times labored or stilted. There are too many footnotes, some of which could have been omitted, while others deserve a place in the text. Not all of the information has been brought up to date. The author states, for example (p. 9), that "In December, he [Longfellow] received the appointment to succeed Ticknor as Smith Professor of Modern Languages at Harvard." On the contrary, George Ticknor retained the title until May 7, 1835, and Longfellow's election occurred on November 17, 1836. He traveled to Europe and back without being able to announce that he was Smith Professor at Harvard. Two manuscript sources of information were apparently not discovered by Dr. Hilen. The Bowdoin College Library has a catalog of the books acquired during the tenure of Longfellow as professor and librarian. In the Harvard archives may be seen the records of books borrowed from the college library for some, if not all, of the years that Longfellow lived in Cambridge. These sources may or may not contain items pertaining to *Longfellow and Scandinavia*, but they ought to be examined.

Six appendixes, with useful notes and comments, follow the author's text: (A) "Longfellow's Scandinavian Journal, June 16-September 24, 1835"; (B) "Letters written by Longfellow in Scandinavia"; (C) "Letters from K. A. Nicander to Longfellow"; (D) "Bibliography of Longfellow's Scandinavian Library"; (E) "A List of Manuscripts Quoted or Referred to in this Book"; (F) "A Bibliography of Published Studies Concerning Longfellow's Relationship with Scandinavia." There is an index of proper names. The entire book is, both in workmanship and subject matter, well designed to facilitate and encourage "an eventual, definitive work on Longfellow."

CARL L. JOHNSON

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Studier i Modern Språkvetenskap. Vol. XV: Uppsala, 1943, 224 pp. 7 sw. cr.
Vol. XVI: Uppsala, 1946, 176 pp. 7 sw. cr.

In 1896 nine young Romanists in Stockholm founded the Nyfilologiska Sällskapet (The Society for Modern Philology). Linguists of other branches joined them rather soon. These Stockholm scholars held frequent meetings for the reading and discussion of papers on different topics. As early as 1899 the first volume of the Society's periodical *Studier i Modern Språkvetenskap* (*Studies in Modern Philology*) appeared. This publication was from the very beginning much esteemed because of the high standards of its contents, and ever since it has been kept on a remarkably high level. Up to the present time, sixteen volumes have appeared, the two latest of which will here be reviewed very briefly. Volume XV appeared in 1943, and the most recent in 1946, celebrating the Society's fiftieth anniversary.

The first of these two volumes begins with two obituary notices on the prominent Romanist Alfred Nordfelt, one of the founders of the Society and its secretary during the first fifteen years. His most eminent achievement was the study of the French loanwords in Swedish. In the *Studier* of 1901 he initiated a series of articles on this subject, all based upon long and exhaustive studies of the history of culture and language. This series is now, posthumously, concluded by the sixth essay, on French loanwords that found entry into Swedish after 1809. These are rather few in comparison with the enormous quantity that poured in during the previous century. The French influence on Swedish culture ceased by the time of the Napoleonic Wars. Among the words listed at least *markis* "sun-blind" and *menageri* "menagerie" had already entered the Swedish vocabulary in the eighteenth century. In this many-sided and brilliant article the author also deals with the Swedish *f*-sounds, which are at least twice the number of the three different sounds Nordfelt includes.

To the Germanic branch belongs an article by Otto Heinertz, entitled "Mittelniederländisch *woepen*." In a convincing argumentation the author shows that the form *hopen* (rhyming with *gehroepen*, an unusual form for *gehroupen*) in a Middle Dutch translation of the famous work *Speculum humana salvationis* is a corruption by the copyist, who did not know the original word. This must have been a verb *woepen*, of which no instance has been found in MDu. It is identical with strong OGH *woofan* "to cry, to weep" or the weak Goth. *wōþjan*, ON *æpa* "to scream, to cry."

In another interesting essay Gösta Langenfelt investigates the origin of the hypocoristic English suffix *-y* in *Billy*, etc. Taking issue with other scholars and basing his opinion upon an extensive body of evidence, the author makes us believe that the suffix in question originated in the Gaelic-speaking districts of Scotland and northern England. When the suffix was taken over by English-speaking people, the word *baby* seems to have played an important part in establishing the hypocoristic function of the suffix.

The bulkiest essay of the volume is written by H. Donner and is entitled "On the Utopia of St. Thomas More." In this famous book More criticized the state of society as it existed in the beginning of the sixteenth century and expressed his hopes for a peaceful solution of the difficult social and religious problems of the time by identifying himself with the cause of the poor. In Robinson's translation the book has become an English classic, and in our times it was gratefully adopted by the Russian Communists but was banned by the Nazis. Much has been written on this work, but the interpreters of later ages have often misunderstood

it and have embodied their own political and religious programs in their critiques. Donner's investigation and argument are entirely objective and dispassionate. It is probably the best exposition we have of More's famous work.

To complete the listing of articles, it remains to mention that Gunnar Tilander publishes and comments on a fragment of an Anglo-Norman poem.

The jubilee volume begins with a formal speech made at the anniversary celebration in 1946 by Carl Svedelius, one of the founders of the Society. It is followed by some humorous pictures from the prehistory of the Society, written by Alfred Nordfelt, secretary for a great many years.

The weightiest essay in the book is an etymological study by Otto Heinertz on the German words *Werft* "warp" and *entwerfen* "to throw (oneself) to and fro." It may very well serve as a model for etymological articles on "Wörter und Sachen." First, the author gives an exhaustive elucidation of the partially complicated problems of phonology and derivation associated with *Werft* and its relatives in German and other languages. Then comes an expert investigation, very intelligible, of the primitive upright web and its terminology. The convincing conclusion is that the primary sense of *Werft* is "turning, twisting." In conjunction with this, Heinertz in another short article throws light on the Swedish word *ränning* "warp."

Gösta Langenfelt analyzes in an interesting essay the roots of the English propword *one*. In the linguistic-psychological investigation he keeps the earlier use of *one* in the meaning of "an individual" separate from the real propword *one*. These two different words of different origin and function have often been confused by other scholars.

Gunnar Tilander contributes an article explaining how *com* in the OFr compounded conjunctions (*aus*)*si com*, (*au*)*tant com*, *tel com*, etc., has gradually been replaced by *que*. Convincingly he shows that *que* has spread analogically from the comparative conjunctions.

In a short contribution Arvid Gabrielson discusses some terminological questions of English phonetics. Bertil Maler etymologizes the Portuguese word *borboleta*, and Håkan Tjerneld prints and comments on a Catalan fragment.

Space does not permit the reviewer any critical remarks. But even if they were offered, they could hardly diminish the value of the highly interesting articles here mentioned. In each volume there is a valuable bibliography, both together covering everything published by Swedes in the fields of Romance and Germanic philology during the years 1940-1945.

ASSAR JANZÉN

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Adalbert Stifter: A Critical Study. By E. A. BLACKALL. Cambridge: At the University Press, 1948. Pp. 432. 25s.

It is a strange fact that the works of Stifter, the German Wordsworth, have never taken root in this country. On the contrary, years ago when the writer of this review repeatedly urged a reputable English publisher to present at least Stifter's *Hochwald* or *Abdias* to the general public, he met with no response, except disparaging criticism of Stifter's alleged stylistic monotony and descriptive tenuity. In a "Short History of German Literature" Stifter does not even figure in the index.

Also in Germany there were not a few obstacles in the way of a real apprecia-

tion of Stifter's Hebbel; adverse criticism threatened to destroy the reputation of the author of the *Nachsommer* and *Witiko*, had not Nietzsche fully rehabilitated Stifter as one of the greatest prose writers in the German language. It must, no doubt, have caused a literary sensation when the philosopher of the Superman paid such a striking, enthusiastic tribute to Stifter, the opponent of arrogant violence and dissonant passion and the champion of continuity and moral discipline in family life.

Mr. Blackall's approach to Stifter's creative work is through the *Nachsommer* which embodies in the ideal of the "Rosenhaus" that view of the world which Stifter felt and knew to be the highest plane of human existence and towards which we must all strive: "In *Witiko*, Stifter has shown the relevance of this ideal for the life of the nation" (p. 420).

The author could, of course, also have used the Preface to the *Bunte Steine*, which contains Stifter's inmost philosophic and artistic belief, as the key to the whole work, as that Preface deals with Stifter's changed values of "great" and "small" and with the gentle law of Nature, the world harmony, which penetrates all existence and our activities and which is to educate man to perfection. Thus we learn that no human being can and must live for himself selfishly alone and that we owe reverence towards life, even in an apparently ruthless Universe in which suffering is a "test" (p. 415) to which we must react.

Stifter's striving for detachment from passion and for perfection in the artistic and moral world is clearly revealed in fascinating references and parallels between the *Nachsommer* and his earlier works: *Condor*, *Feldblumen*, *Narrenburg*, *Mappe meines Urgroßvaters*, *Brigitta*, *Hagestolz*, *Zwei Schwestern*, etc. In the *Nachsommer* Stifter fulfilled a conscious cultivation of form which none had managed to reach since Goethe or was again to attain before Stefan George.

Already in the chapter "The Setting" the author carefully traces the inherent germs and sources of Stifter's later perfection; cf. the subtle comparisons between reality and Stifter's art, the references to local legend and customs (Christmas festivity) in *Katzensilber* and *Bergkristall*. Compare further Stifter's birthplace and the description in *Granit*, *Kremsmünster*, and the "Rosenhaus," or the touching figure of the country parson in *Kremsmünster* and in *Kalkstein*. The significance of Stifter's vivid images in his prose writing is also well elucidated. Moreover, literary ancestors—Jean Paul, Tieck (*Der Alte vom Berge*, *Der Gelehrte*), Goethe, etc.—are carefully assessed.

There are only a few passages which seem to sidetrack the author or mar an otherwise exemplary monograph, e.g., the rather dogmatic summary chapter on the German novel in general. Perhaps a reference to contemporary translations (English and American) of Stifter's stories could have been made, e.g., Mr. R. G. L. Barrett's renderings of the *Forest*, *Brigitta*, *Christmas Eve*, etc., into English seem to be unknown. But these are faint blemishes in view of the author's highly sensitive power of empathy and generous readiness to understand and interpret Stifter's greatness.

AUGUST CLOSS

University of Bristol

Mimesis: Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literatur. By ERICH AUERBACH. Bern: A. Francke A. G. Verlag, 1946. Pp. 503.

Rich and subtle, this book by a German professor who has now made his home in America is not only *Geistesgeschichte* at its best, but also points into the future. For the time has come to lay down the barriers of nationalisms, periods, and genres that hem in the history of literature; the time has come to hear, and to write down like a score, the symphony of human civilization to which all nations, all arts and sciences concur. Auerbach clears the ground for such an enterprise. For his is the philosophical mind bent on grasping the essentials, the vision that embraces three thousand years of Western civilization, and his also the ingenuity in trying out a new method.

He asks, "How does Man see Reality?" and he relies for an answer on a succession of text interpretations. Like the Neo-Platonists (and unlike Plato himself, who in *Republic X* rejected *mimesis*, imitation, as being two steps away from the Ideal), Auerbach is confident that poetry reflects truth and that comparing the images will reveal the changing qualities of the mirror. Scanning his vast material, which covers literary expression from Homer and the Old Testament to Proust and Virginia Woolf, he detects a definite pattern woven in the course of the centuries: not until nineteenth-century France is full tragical dignity given to plain everyday persons. How is such an occurrence to be explained?

The ancients, Auerbach argues, separated the styles, denying tragedy to people of low condition. Christianity, by the very fact of Incarnation and Crucifixion, mixed the lowly and the sublime; however, by conceiving this life as a prefiguration, a *figura*, of life in the hereafter, it denied tragedy itself. Only when this metaphysical security was shattered, when destiny, with Rabelais, Montaigne, Shakespeare, regained the character of the Unknown, could the full impact of tragedy be felt again. And it took Stendhal and Balzac, with their new outlook on society, to discover the tragical potentialities of clerks and shopkeepers and to realize that the essence of human life is the same everywhere and with everybody.

Such are some of the results of Auerbach's unconventional method. To many scholars in various fields they will prove a challenge and an inspiration. Here are some questions that beset the reader: What exactly is the role of imitation in art, as compared with self-expression, exaltation, and the play of the *homo ludens*? What is the sociological or psychological basis for the Greek and Roman separation of styles? How far does the history of art confirm the theory of a Christian realism? (There is the Pantokrator preceding the *Ecce homo*!) Is *figura* a theory or an experience? Do not its two focal points become one for the mystic? No doubt it was the new stratification of French society after the Revolution that enlightened the French realistic writers, but was not a loss of cosmic consciousness the price paid for this progress? (And how is it that Rembrandt, in the seventeenth century, almost anticipates Dostoevski?)

Auerbach himself tells us how necessity as well as inclination kept him from writing a systematic history of realism and made him grapple, not with schools, influences, abstractions, but with life itself, as it is caught between the lines of his texts. Auerbach is past master in this difficult and delicate art. Imbued with the spirit of Husserl and Bergson, trained by the works of Norden, Wölfflin, Meinecke, he combines historical and sociological insight with the exquisite sensibility of the aestheticist. From a single scene, from its style and syntax, he is able to reconstruct the inner and outer world of a writer.

The nineteen chapters of *Mimesis*, with their attractive and bewildering titles ("Sicharius and Chramnesindus," "The Tired Prince," "The Interrupted Supper," etc.) contain about forty such analyses and deal with passages in Latin, French, Italian, German, and English. The more one reads, the more one is carried away by the author's presentation. Even the best of scholars will admit that Auerbach teaches them how to read: taking in the subject with all the pores of body and soul, digesting the facts by means of a vast erudition, finally re-creating the whole as a product of the forces that shaped it. Certainly such literary criticism is *not* three steps away from truth. One feels tempted to say: the aesthetic thinker (as Auerbach has been styled by F. Bööck, *Svenska Dagbladet*, August 21, 1947) is he for whom poetry and art become transparent.

By such magic, he makes us relive the timeless depth of *Genesis* 22, the heavy atmosphere of imperial Rome, the rejuvenating impulses of Christianity. From the Merovingian world with its limited vistas, he leads us to the glowing *Chanson de Roland*, to the naïve iron-clad Platonism of *Yvain*. The scene from Dante's *Inferno* ushers in the Renaissance: for according to Auerbach, life after death enhances the realism of those sinners to such a degree that they eclipse their own supernatural setting. In the following, we can mention some highlights only: the story of Mme du Chastel (fifteenth century), the pages on the inflated baroque ego, on the public in the times of Louis XIV. But of course the chapters on French realism, culminating in the appreciation of Zola and the Goncourts, are the main pillars of *Mimesis*.

If they are the pillars, those on the twentieth-century writers are the keystone. Here Auerbach's method is triumphant. Method means road. His leads to a high place. It shows us the growth of consciousness: after having reached full historical and social awareness in Stendhal and Balzac, it transcends, with Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Proust, the very limits of time and personality. Everything seems to break apart—forms of government, rules, institutions—but a new awareness is born, strangely saturated with a sense of eternity.

Mimesis, as its author rightly assumes, is a fruit of this new awareness. It is not only a scholarly treatise; it reveals the author's heart and mind; its style is playful as well as searching, it mixes the lowly and the sublime. It will be difficult to translate, but it should be translated.

HELEN ADOLF

Pennsylvania State College

Deutsche Beiträge zur geistigen Überlieferung. Herausgegeben in Verbindung mit HELENA M. GAMER, ULRICH MIDDENDORF, WILHELM PAUCK, FRITZ K. RICHTER, WERNER RICHTER, HANS ROTHFELS VON ARNOLD BERGSTRAESSER. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947. Pp. ix + 252. \$4.00.

It is urgently to be hoped that this fine collection of eleven original articles, arranged, in general, in historical order—in addition to a critical survey of recent research in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland on the subject of classical antiquity—may prove to be but the first issue of these "German Contributions." The editor's first sentence gives the cue to the idea which must have preceded the preparation of this volume: "In the German tradition there are forces which belong to the cultural heritage of western civilization as rare and essential elements." The voice of the authors is that of Germans, transplanted to America, who fortunately have not lost faith in the values to which so many German thinkers and artists in so many fields of creative endeavor have held fast.

In the spirit of Herder, then, these contributions are intended to serve the "strivings of the present and the hope for the future" (p. vii). Evaluation, reevaluation, and the history of ideas are the methods used to show the forward march of mankind as evidenced by such men as Erasmus, Luther, Goethe, Schiller, and Lessing, as well as by phases of Romanticism, liturgy, and twentieth-century movements. The authors have performed this task convincingly and, indeed, beautifully. The strength of this work, however, is likewise its weakness: How can it fulfill its avowed purpose, in this country at least, when it is written entirely in German?

In this nicely edited and manufactured volume, with its six excellent plates, it is annoying to see *ss* written for the digraph *ß*. The reviewer is also out of sympathy with the system of placing the footnotes at the end of each article. There are exactly 420 superscript numerals in the body of this book indicating footnotes, forcing the careful reader to search for the footnotes each time in the manner of a poor language student thumbing the vocabulary in the back of his reader!

CURTIS C. D. VAIL

University of Washington

German Literature as Reflected in the German-Language Press of St. Louis prior to 1898. By ERICH P. HOFACKER. St. Louis: Washington University Studies, new series, Language and Literature, No. 16, May, 1946. Pp. 125. \$1.50.

Although German-language editors of St. Louis, like other American editors, were more interested in pleasing their readers, as a means of keeping circulation up, rather than improving literary taste, they printed a number of fine novels and short stories well known to students of nineteenth-century German literature. German literature, as presented by the German press of St. Louis, was "surprisingly comprehensive."

The chapters of Erich P. Hofacker's careful and accurate survey are arranged chronologically according to the system of a traditional German history of literature: "The Pre-Classical Period," "Goethe," "Schiller," "The Age of Romanticism," etc. The material examined concerns itself with standard German literary products. The profusive German-American literature of the area, for instance the "*schöngeistige*" production of the Missouri Synod Germans and the wealth of locally composed plays, of which I mention only one, *Amanda*, by J. G. Woerner, judge of the St. Louis Probate Court, are not considered.

However, that the scholar has the right to limit himself according to his objective is a valid, albeit trite, statement. Hofacker wished to test the general literary taste of the German newspaper public. Since taste is a matter of accepted usage, he is justified in restricting his study to the printing and reception of works listed in the accepted literary surveys.

A careful study of the kind Hofacker has made here should help to focus the attention of Germanists on the fact that German-American newspapers are still relatively untapped sources of rich material. It is to be hoped that more of the guild with the proper critical endowment—knowledge of literature (including the "merely popular"), acquaintance with language in its varying stylistic levels, and thorough training in German and American "Volkskunde"—will join the small handful of "professionals" who labor at German-Americana in the midst of a weltering mass of amateurs.

RALPH C. WOOD

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Tristan und Isolde: A Poem by Gottfried von Strassburg. Edited with Introduction, Notes, Glossary, and a Facsimile, by AUGUST CLOSS. Oxford: Basil Blackwell (Blackwell's German Texts, ed. James Boyd), 2nd rev. ed., 1947. Pp. lx + 205.

This second revised edition of what might be described as "the highlights of Gottfried's *Tristan und Isolde*" appears at a time when the need for such texts is especially acute. The excellent introduction and bibliographical material permits one to use this book not merely as a linguistic exercise, but more as an introduction to one of the richest periods of German literature. Gottfried's *Tristan*, as here represented, should serve ideally in this respect because of its delightful simplicity, its poetic charm, and its splendid narrative continuity. It also offers vivid glimpses of courtly life in the medieval world and should be best appreciated in relation to similar works of the day.

Professor Closs demonstrates here an unusual skill in winning the immediate enthusiasm of students for this work. The selection of episodes is so well planned that the story presents a well-knit whole, despite the fact that about two-thirds of the original is omitted. In this regard, it seems useful to compare this text with the *Übungstext* of Friedrich Ranke (*Tristan und Isolde, in Auswahl*), which was published the previous year. The Closs edition contains something over 7,000 lines, with 27 episodes included, and there is an average of about 435 lines omitted within and between each episode. Hence, the gist of the story itself is never lost. Ranke's selections total some 4,300 lines, with 6 episodes; an average of 2,700 lines is omitted between episodes, none of which are abridged. Obviously, Ranke's edition assumes only the functions of an *Übungstext*, while the Closs edition does this and a great deal more.

The first edition of Closs's text appeared in 1944 and was later reviewed by Carl Bayerschmidt (*MLQ*, VI [1945], 114-16). Most of the textual errors cited by that reviewer have been corrected in the second edition. A few typographical errors have slipped in: e.g., page xxviii, *Elihart* for *Eilhart*; page 4, *unmouze* for *unmuose*; page 5, *dâ mite* for *dâ mite*; page 12, *sælden* for *salden*; page 60, footnote 7100 for 7110; page 87, *ime* for *ime*; page 95 *Isote* for *Isôte*; page 101, *it* for *ir*. I would agree with Bayerschmidt that a summary of lines omitted should be given between episodes, but this is a matter which the editor felt was obviated by the list of chapter headings of early scribes (given on pages xlii-xliv of the Introduction). Indeed, it is a rare delight to encounter a text which has received such personal care and devotion as this. The Introduction, Notes, and Glossary all reflect the insight and erudition of the editor. Although not all of Bechstein's excellent comments are included, and the student might well complain that the Glossary is inadequate for his purposes, Closs has done very well with the necessary limitations of the text. It would be hard to examine such a work with a casual glance, since even the reviewer finds this profound enthusiasm for Gottfried's *Tristan* a truly contagious pleasure.

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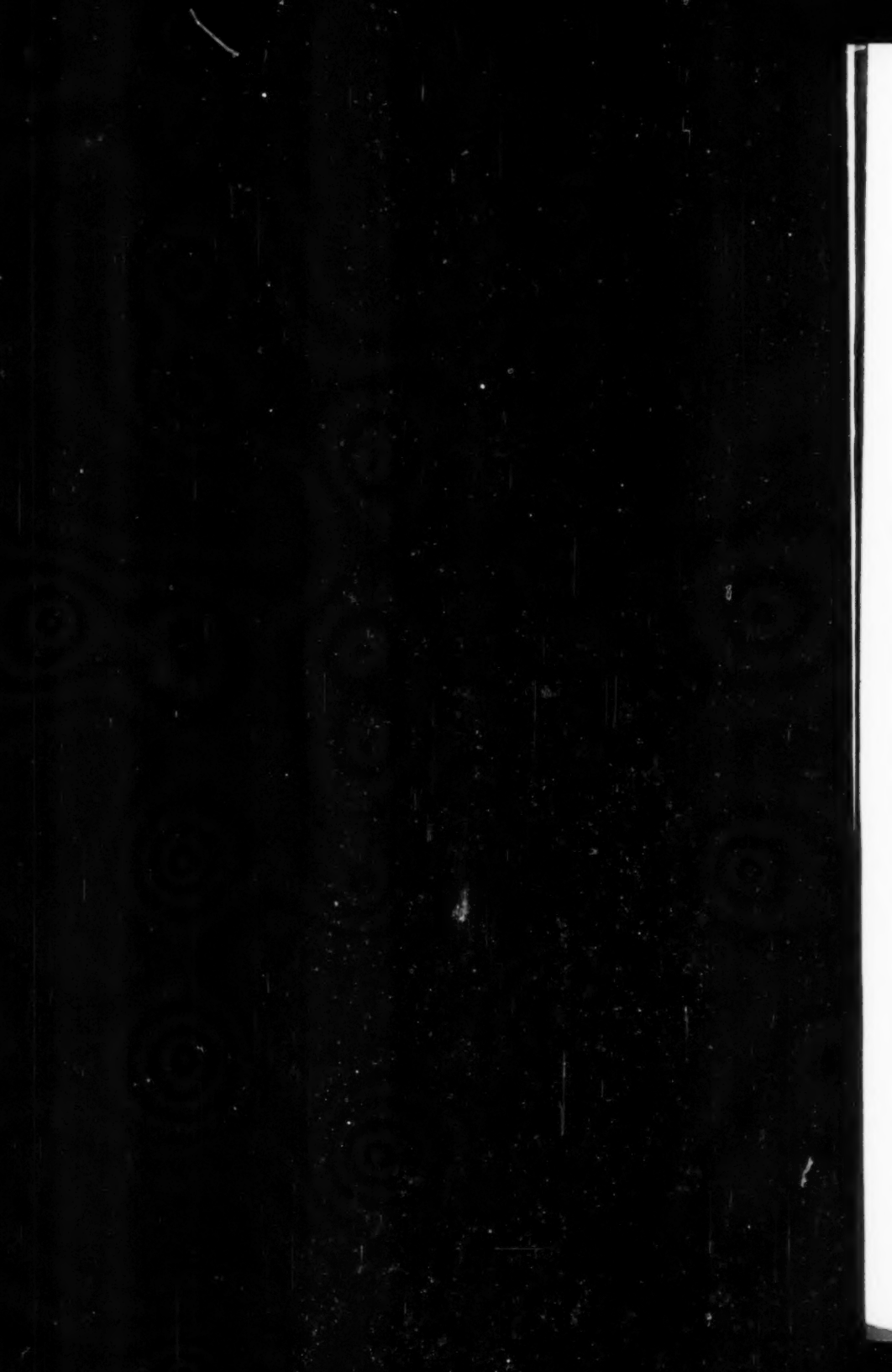
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